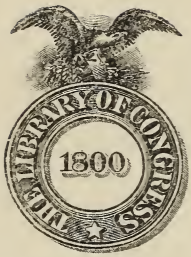

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John Wesley

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WESLEYANA:

OR, A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF

WESLEYAN THEOLOGY;

SELECTED FROM THE WRITINGS OF

THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.

AND SO ARRANGED AS TO FORM A MINIATURE BODY OF DIVINITY.

(FROM A LONDON PUBLICATION.)

REVISED, ENLARGED, AND AN INDEX ADDED.

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PREFACE TO WESLEYANA.

THE opposers of Methodism have, both in their oral teachings and in their writings, often misrepresented its doctrines: some, perhaps, ignorantly and very bunglingly; some artfully and very ingeniously; and some, we fear, wickedly. By some we have been represented as teaching that man makes the first step toward his recovery from sin; that we are to expect justification by the merit of works; that in so doing we rob Christ of his crown, and set aside the agency of the Holy Spirit; while not a few suppose that we believe and teach the doctrine of absolute and immaculate perfection. As an answer to the first part of this charge, viz., "that man makes the first step toward his recovery from sin," we would say, Read our hymns.

> "What are our works but sin and death
> Till thou thy quick'ning Spirit breathe;
> Thou giv'st the power thy grace to move:
> O wondrous grace! O boundless love!"

As an answer to the second, viz., "that we are to expect justification by works," let the following be noticed:—

> "Thou all our works in us hast wrought,
> Our good is all divine;
> The praise of every virtuous thought
> And righteous word is thine."

> "Look unto him, ye nations; own
> Your God, ye fallen race;
> Look, and be saved through faith alone,
> Be justified by grace."

To the third charge, viz., that of "robbing Christ of his crown," we must say, Read the following:—

> "A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
> Into thy hands I fall;
> Be thou my strength and righteousness,
> My JESUS and my ALL."

> "I loathe myself when God I see,
> And into nothing fall;
> Content if thou exalted be,
> And Christ be ALL IN ALL."

To the fourth charge, viz., "setting aside the agency of the Holy Spirit," we reply, Look at this :—

"Mercy and grace are thine alone,
And power and wisdom too:
Without the Spirit of thy Son
We nothing good can do.
We cannot speak one useful word,
One holy thought conceive,
Unless, in answer to our Lord,
Thyself the blessing give."

To the fifth charge, viz., that "the Methodists believe in absolute perfection as attainable in this life," we reply, We never taught, or even dreamed, of such a perfection as excludes all farther attainments, or higher degrees of love to God and man in this life, much less of such a state of grace from which it is impossible to fall. On this subject our language is,—

"Every moment, Lord, I need
The merit of thy death."

On the subject of the Methodist doctrines we are happy to give the views of one who has long been acquainted with them, and who is able to judge.

To the Editor of the [Wesleyan] Methodist Magazine.

I have lately been taking a view of the origin of Methodism, and of the manner in which it has pleased God so graciously to carry on that great work which has proved a source of good to hundreds of thousands of precious souls, and which still continues so graciously to prevail.

When it pleased God to raise up the Rev. John Wesley to be the founder of Methodism, he resolved, through divine help, to make the BIBLE his only guide in all the important doctrines which he embraced, and which he faithfully delivered to the people. His own language was, "I design plain truth for plain people: therefore, of set purpose, I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations, from all perplexed and intricate reasonings, and, as far as possible, from even the show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scriptures."

The following sentiments are also truly worthy of that great man:—"I am a creature of a day, passing through

life as an arrow through the air; I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God, just hovering over the great gulf, till a few moments hence I am no more seen! I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing, the way to heaven, how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end he came down from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri.* Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone, only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does any thing appear dark and intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights. Lord, is it not thy word, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God?' 'Thou givest liberally, and upbraidest not?' Thou hast said, 'If any be willing to do thy will, he shall know.' I am willing to do, let me know thy will. I then search after, and consider parallel passages of Scripture; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remain, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God; and then the writings, whereby, being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach."

It was in the same spirit that the first Methodist preachers examined into the doctrines of the book of God. When the first conference was held, at which was present the Rev. John Wesley, the Rev. Charles Wesley, the Rev. John Hodges, rector of Wenvo, and several others, it is evident that they entered on the subject of Christian doctrine in that spirit which was likely to draw down the divine blessing on their consultations. They resolved that all things should be considered as in the immediate presence of God; that every point which was proposed should be examined to the foundation; and that every question which might arise should be thoroughly debated and settled.

Having entered on their work in that blessed spirit, and with a single eye to the glory of God, we may reasonably expect that they would be led into all truth. The truths

which they thus learned they faithfully preached. Divine power accompanied the word; thousands of persons were awakened to a sense of their guilt and of their danger; and being directed to the Lord Jesus Christ as their only, but all-sufficient Saviour, they found redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of their sins. Their lives became holy and happy, and many of the first Methodists are now safely landed on the heavenly shore.

Through the peculiar providence of God, Mr. Wesley was long spared as a father to the growing societies; and at various times was led to write on almost every subject connected with divinity. His Notes on the New Testament, though concise, are clear and full. His Sermons are probably unrivalled for a clear statement of divine truth, and a practical and powerful application of that truth. His controversial pieces are on some of the most important truths of the Bible, which are defended in a masterly manner. In them truth is triumphant. His hymns, with those of his brother Charles, and a selection from some other authors, form a volume which, for real excellence, is probably the first in the English language. The whole of his works taken collectively form a full statement of Scriptural truths, properly explained, and practically applied. On the ground which was laid during his life, Methodism has continued to prosper in an extraordinary manner, and hitherto has suffered no decay. On the present system of sound doctrine and proper discipline we have reason to expect that it will continue to prevail till the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God; yea, till suns shall rise and set no more.

As a member of the Methodist body, I feel anxious that we may ever preserve the purity both of our doctrine and our discipline; and the purport of my addressing you, especially at this time, is to state the peculiar necessity of our continuing to abide by our former truths, and of guarding the sacred deposite which God has committed to our care.

There are two theories that have been advanced which appear to militate against our views of the important doctrine of *regeneration*, as stated in the writings of Mr. Wesley, and more especially in the book of God.

One of these theories is, that *baptism*, when properly administered, is *regeneration*.

That the apostles were not of that opinion is evident; for when St. Peter went to Samaria he found Simon (generally termed Simon Magus) among the newly formed society of Christians who had been baptized. But so far was Peter from considering him as *regenerated*, that he said to him, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity."

That our reformers* did not consider *baptism* as *regeneration* is evident from the Catechism which they compiled, where they say that "baptism is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." And that Mr. Wesley was not of that opinion is also evident from all his writings, but especially from his Sermon on the New Birth, where he says, "And, first, it follows that *baptism* is *not* the *new birth;* they are *not* one and the same thing." Again: "For what can be more plain than that the one is an *external*, the other an *internal* work? that the one is a *visible*, the other an *invisible* thing, and, therefore, that they are wholly different from each other—the one being an *act of man*, purifying the body; the other, a *change wrought by God* in the soul. So that the former is just as distinguishable from the latter as the soul from the body, or water from the Holy Ghost."

The other theory is, that all professing Christians† are, in the same sense in which the New Testament writers use the expressions, *regenerate*, *born again*, *justified*, and *members of Christ's body*. Strange as this doctrine may appear, it has had its advocates; but if we examine into the writings of the reformers, of Mr. Wesley, and also of those who were inspired by the Holy Ghost, we shall find that this novel theory is without foundation.

Mr. Wesley is remarkably clear on this subject. In his Sermon on the Marks of the New Birth he says, "But it is not a barely notional or speculative faith which is here spoken of by the apostle. It is not a bare assent to this proposition, 'Jesus is the Christ,' nor indeed to all the propositions contained in our creed, or in the Old and New

* The compilers of the Book of Common Prayer.—Eds.

† The Episcopalians only hold this sentiment.—Eds.

Testament. It is not merely an assent to any or all these credible things as credible. To say this, were to say (which who could hear?) that the devils were born of God, for they have this faith. They, trembling, believe both that Jesus is the Christ, and that all Scripture, having been given by inspiration of God, is true as God is true, &c., yet, notwithstanding this faith, they are still 'reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day.'" In his Sermon on the Way to the Kingdom, his expressions are equally strong and equally proper. "A man may be orthodox in every point; he may not only espouse right opinions, but zealously defend them against all opposers; he may think justly concerning the incarnation of our Lord, concerning the ever blessed Trinity, and every other doctrine contained in the oracles of God; he may assent to all the three creeds, that called the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian; and yet it is possible he may have no religion at all, no more than a Jew, Turk, or Pagan. He may be almost as orthodox as the devil, &c., and may all the while be as great a stranger as he to the religion of the heart."

We must be careful not to anathematize those persons who do not think with us. To their own Master they stand or fall. But we, as a body of people whom the Lord has graciously raised up as out of the dust, and whom he has honoured with almost unexampled prosperity in the revival of his work, must be careful to "walk by the same rule, and mind the same things." Of Methodism, as to purity of doctrine, soundness of discipline, and true Christian experience, I would ever say, "*Esto perpetua.*"

G. MARSDEN.

In addition to the above, we need only observe that to the young preacher, the sincere inquirer who wishes to know what were Mr. Wesley's own views of Scripture doctrine, and to every Methodist, as a book of reference, *Wesleyana* will always be an acceptable and useful companion.

EDITORS.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.

The name of John Wesley has long been known and honoured by thousands, in every part of the world where the English language is spoken or understood. An extensive and growing society, in England and her dependencies, and a flourishing church in this country, of which he undesignedly became the founder, appreciate his labours, and venerate his memory. Beyond the circle of his immediate connection, however, little has been known till recently respecting the real history and sentiments of this extraordinary man. The publication of "The Life of Wesley," by Mr. Southey, attracted much of public attention, and excited a pretty general desire to know something respecting an individual whose labours have produced a revolution in the moral world, the effect of which has been felt by the antipodes. "Among those who have appeared as the biographers of Wesley, some," says Mr. Southey, "have wanted the heart to understand his worth, or the will to do it justice; others have not possessed freedom or strength of intellect to perceive wherein he was erroneous. Nor are these the only difficulties which have interposed themselves in the way of an impartial and just biography of the founder of Methodism. To delineate the character of one so opposing and opposed calls not only for the utmost candour, and the strictest impartiality, but also for a clear apprehension and a deep conviction of the importance of those subjects, the interests

of which it was the great business of his life to advance." Watson's "Observations on Southey's Life of Wesley" should always be read in connection with that work.

The subject of the present sketch was descended from a family of high respectability for learning, and considerable eminence for piety. Bartholomew Wesley, his great-grandfather, received his education in one of the universities, and afterward held the living of Allington in Dorsetshire. From this he was ejected by the "Act of Uniformity;" and the medical knowledge which he had acquired, from motives of charity, became the means of his subsistence. John, his son, was educated at New Inn Hall, Oxford, in the time of the Commonwealth; he was distinguished for his piety, and eminent for his attainments in the Oriental tongues. He was presented to the living of Blandford, whence he also was ejected for non-conformity. He continued to preach in various places, in the midst of relentless persecutors, and died at the early age of 34 years. Bartholomew, his father, was then living, but did not long survive the premature death of his son. John Wesley left two sons, of whom Samuel, the father of the founder of Methodism, was the younger. At an early age, (some of his biographers say sixteen, but from extracts given by Mr. Southey, from registers of the college, it appears he was twenty-two,) he walked to Oxford, and entered himself as a poor scholar at Exeter College. Here he was obliged to support himself by instructing the younger students, till he took his bachelor's degree. He then went to London, and was ordained deacon. He obtained a curacy, which he held twelve months, when he was appointed chaplain on board the fleet. At the end of one year he returned to London, and obtained a second curacy, and married Susannah, daughter of Dr. Annesley, one of the ejected ministers. Mr. Samuel Wesley was among the first who wrote in defence of the revolution of

1688. This work he dedicated to Queen Mary, who rewarded him with the living of Epworth, in Lincolnshire, about the year 1693, which he held for upward of forty years, and where he died, respected and beloved by his parishioners. His wife Susannah was a woman of a highly improved mind, of a strong understanding, a good judgment, and of deep and genuine piety. She discharged the various duties of life with the most scrupulous fidelity. She was an excellent wife, and an exemplary parent; and it is but reasonable to believe that to her pious instructions and Christian deportment is attributable, in a great degree, the formation of those principles which in after life so eminently distinguished her sons, John and Charles Wesley. She died 23d of July, 1742.

Mr. John Wesley, the subject of the present sketch, was the second son of Samuel and Susannah Wesley; he was born at Epworth, on the 17th of June, 1703, O. S. When he was nearly six years of age, he narrowly escaped being consumed in the flames of his father's house, which took fire. This occurrence made a deep impression on his mind, which he retained ever afterward. John, with his brothers and sisters, received the first rudiments of his education from his mother, who was well qualified for such a duty. Her labours and prayers were crowned with success, and when about eight years old, he began to partake of the sacrament. In 1714 he was placed at the Charter-house, where he was distinguished for his diligence and progress in learning: and at seventeen he was removed to Christ Church, Oxford. Prior to his removal from the Charter-house, he had acquired some considerable knowledge of Hebrew under the tuition of his brother Samuel; and he now pursued his studies with unabated vigour, and with additional advantages. "He appeared," says Mr. Badcock, in the Westminster Magazine, "the very sensible and acute collegian—a young fellow of the finest clas-

sical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments." His skill in logic was great, "by which," says Mr. Southey, "he frequently put to silence those who contended with him in after life. No man, indeed, was ever more dexterous in the art of reasoning." His perfect knowledge of the classics gave a smooth polish to his wit, and an air of superior elegance to all his compositions. Like his father and his brother, he was no inconsiderable poet in his youth, but this was a talent which he forbore to use. When the time arrived for him to think seriously of entering into holy orders, he began to feel some scruples as to the motives by which he might be influenced in taking so solemn and important a step. This led him to close self-examination, to much prayer, and a closer application to theological studies. He determined to give himself wholly to God; and having prepared himself with the most conscientious care for the ministerial office, he was ordained deacon, by Dr. Potter, bishop of Oxford, on the 19th of September, 1725. In the ensuing spring he offered himself for a fellowship at Lincoln College, to which he was elected in the month of March, though not without very considerable opposition. In the following month he left Oxford for Epworth, where he spent the whole summer, assisting his father in his ministerial duties. He returned to Oxford in the month of September, and in the November following was elected Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes. On his removal to Lincoln College, he resolved to avoid forming an acquaintance with such as were not seriously given to God, and to devote his whole time to study and meditation. He laid down for himself a plan of proceeding to which he conscientiously adhered, and from which he derived the most lasting benefit. His literary character was now established in the University; and on the 15th of February in the next year, he proceeded to master of arts. In the month of August fol-

lowing he left Oxford for Wroote, one of his father's livings, to officiate as his curate. After remaining here two years, he was summoned back to Oxford, where he was ordained priest, by Dr. Potter, who had before ordained him deacon. In the following month he again left Oxford for Lincolnshire, and did not return till June 1729. On his return he found a little society formed by his brother Charles, and two or three under-graduates, for the purpose of assisting each other in their studies, and the cultivation of their time. This infant society now placed itself under the direction of John: its numbers were soon augmented: they visited the prisoners in the castle, and the sick poor of the town, to relieve whose distress they denied themselves many of the necessaries of life. Their rules of study and discipline, with their regular attendance at the sacrament every week, soon drew upon them the notice and sneers of the college, and procured for them the harmless name of *Methodists*. To the younger members of the University their conduct was matter of general ridicule; and the elder and wiser ones considered their course as fast verging to extravagance and enthusiasm: a meeting was held at Christ Church, by the seniors of the College, to consult in what manner the evil might be checked. Their efforts, however, proved fruitless; and notwithstanding the turning aside of some of the members of this little community, others were added to their numbers, and steadfastly adhered to their rules. It should not be omitted, that these pious young gentlemen were all zealous members of the Church of England; not only tenacious of all her doctrines, as far as they yet understood them, but of all her discipline, to the minutest circumstance. They also added to their former practices a regular observance of the fasts of the Church, rightly considering that the general neglect into which they had fallen would afford no excuse for them. In the summer of 1732

John, with his two brothers, visited Epworth. For some time their father had been declining, and he was most solicitous that the cure in which he had so long laboured should be secured for his son John. Upon the first mention of this subject John appears to have hesitated as to the course he should adopt; and after maturely considering the subject, he determined to remain at Oxford, from a conviction that he should there have better opportunities of promoting his spiritual welfare. Having come to this determination, he resolved to seclude himself from the world, and give himself up entirely to religious pursuits, intent only upon obtaining "the wisdom that is from above." One of the first subjects to which Mr. Wesley now turned his attention was the nature of "Christian liberty," which he discussed at some length in a letter to his mother, whose opinion he was desirous of having upon the subject. For the discussion of this question, however, he is pronounced by one of his biographers to have been incompetent. "For, (1.) He was not *justified*,—consequently not free from the guilt of sin. He could not therefore judge of the 'glorious liberty of the children of God,' which he ably stated afterward in several of his sermons. (2.) He had no clear conception of that 'unction of the Holy One,' whereby we are to 'know all things' necessary for our walk with God. 'Walk in the Spirit,'—and 'walk in the light, as He is in the light,' were precepts as yet too high for him. He had not passed the 'strait gate,' and could scarcely estimate the privileges of the 'narrow way.'"*

In the month of April 1735, Mr. Wesley's father died, and in the following month the living of Epworth was given away: so that he now considered himself as fully settled at Oxford without the probability of being further

* Moore's Life of Wesley.

molested in his quiet retreat. But a new scene of action was soon opened to his view. Going to London to carry into effect his father's desire of presenting his work upon the Book of Job to Queen Caroline, he found that the trustees of the new colony of Georgia were in search of persons who would preach the gospel there to the settlers and Indians, and that they had fixed their eyes upon him and his associates, as men who possessed the habits and the qualities requisite for such a service. Dr. Burton, of Corpus Christi College, who highly esteemed Mr. Wesley, was one of the trustees, and being in London at this time, introduced him to Mr. Oglethorpe, the founder of the colony. At first Mr. Wesley did not see his way clear to accept the invitation; but after having consulted his friends, and obtained his mother's assent, he determined upon engaging in the work. It had been the intention of his brother Charles to spend all his days at Oxford as a tutor, for he dreaded exceedingly to enter into orders: now, however, he determined to accompany his brother. He engaged himself as secretary to Mr. Oglethorpe, and also as secretary for Indian affairs. A little before he left England he was ordained deacon, by Dr. Potter, bishop of Oxford; and then priest, by Dr. Gibson, bishop of London. On the 14th of October, 1735, Mr. Wesley and his brother Charles left London for Gravesend, accompanied by Mr. Ingham, and Mr. Delamotte, in order to embark for Georgia. "Our end," says he, "in leaving our native country, was not to avoid want, (God having given us plenty of temporal blessings,) nor to gain riches and honour; but singly this, to save our souls, to live wholly to the glory of God." On board the same vessel there were twenty-six Moravians, going to join a party of their brethren who had gone out the preceding year. Mr. Wesley was much struck with the Christian deportment, the fervent piety, and the great simplicity, of these his shipmates; and immediately

set himself to study the German language, in order to converse with them. During the voyage he and his associates put themselves under a severe course of Christian discipline, and adopted every means for redeeming and improving their time.

On the 5th of February, 1736, they arrived in Savannah river in Georgia, and about eight the next morning landed on a small uninhabited island, where Mr. Oglethorpe led them to a rising ground, and they all knelt and returned thanks to God for having arrived in safety. The brothers now separated. Charles went with Mr. Ingham to Frederica, and John and Mr. Delamotte took up their lodging with the Moravians at Savannah. Mr. Wesley had not long entered upon his work before he encountered much opposition. The new colony could not endure the strictness and earnestness with which he enforced the doctrines and practice of religion, and inveighed against every thing which savoured not of the gospel. The opposition became at length so general that a reconciliation seemed impossible; and Mr. Wesley, after advising with his Moravian friends, determined to return to England. "I saw clearly," says he, "the hour was come for leaving this place: and as soon as evening prayers were over, about eight o'clock, the tide then serving, I shook off the dust of my feet, and left Georgia, after having preached the gospel there, (not as I ought, but as I was able,) one year and nearly nine months."

During his voyage to England Mr. Wesley entered into a close and severe examination of himself, of which he thus records the result: "By the most infallible proofs I am convinced,—(1.) of unbelief; having no such faith in Christ as will prevent my heart from being troubled—(2.) of pride, throughout my life past, inasmuch as I thought I had what I find I have not—(3.) of gross irrecollection; inasmuch as in a storm I cry to God every moment; in a

calm, not—(4.) of levity and luxuriancy of spirit,—appearing by my speaking words not tending to edify; but most by my manner of speaking of my enemies.—Lord, save, or I perish! Save me,—(1.) by such a faith as implies peace in life and death—(2.) by such humility as may fill my heart from this hour for ever, with a piercing uninterrupted sense that hitherto I have done nothing—(3.) by such a recollection as may enable me to cry out every moment—(4.) by steadiness, seriousness, σεμνοτητι, *sobriety of spirit*, avoiding as fire every word that tendeth not to edifying, and never speaking of any who oppose me, or sin against God, without all my own sins set in array before my face." He now felt more than ever the want of that living faith which he afterward so clearly explained and successfully enforced. "I went to America," says he, "to convert the Indians; but O! who shall convert me? who is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion; I can talk well, nay, and believe myself safe while no danger is near; but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled: nor can I say, 'To die is gain!'"

On the 1st of February, 1738, Mr. Wesley landed at Deal, where he was informed Mr. Whitefield had sailed the day before for Georgia. He read prayers, and explained a portion of Scripture to a large company at the inn; and on the third day arrived safe in London. In reviewing the past occurrences of his life at this time, Mr. Wesley appears to have been deeply affected with a lively sense of many providential interpositions which had been effected in his behalf; and however painful to his feelings, and detrimental to his worldly prospects, the voyage to Georgia appears to have been, he heartily thanked God for having carried him to that strange land. After waiting on General Oglethorpe and on the trustees of Georgia, he was invited to preach in several of the churches.

He now began to be popular, appearing in a new character, as a missionary lately returned from preaching the gospel to the Indians in America. The crowded churches, together with the offence given by his plain and heart-searching sermons, produced in each place, at last, the following repulsion: "Sir, you must preach here no more."

About this time the two Wesleys became acquainted with Peter Boehler; they soon became strongly attached to each other; and by his conversation they were more deeply convinced of their utter want of the faith of the gospel. John now began to think that he ought to desist from preaching—for how could he preach to others who had not faith himself? He consulted Boehler, who charged him not to relinquish his work. "But what can I preach?" said Mr. Wesley. "Preach faith *till* you have it," said the Moravian; "and then, *because* you have it, you *will* preach faith." In conformity with this advice he now declared everywhere "the faith as it is in Jesus," and many willingly heard, and "received it gladly." About this time he began to pray extempore, as did also his brother Charles; a practice for which they were greatly censured by some persons, particularly by their brother Samuel.

On the first of May, about forty or fifty persons, many of whom were Moravians, agreed to form themselves into a religious society, in obedience to the command of God by St. James, (v. 16,) and Mr. Wesley drew up the rules. They were to be divided into several bands or little companies, none consisting of fewer than five, nor more than ten persons. In these bands every one in order engaged to speak as freely, plainly, and concisely, as he could, the real state of his heart, with his several temptations and deliverances since the last meeting. On Wednesday evenings, at eight o'clock, all the bands were to have a confer-

ence, beginning and ending with hymns and prayers. Any person who desired admittance into this society was to be asked, what were his motives ?—whether he would be entirely open, using no kind of reserve, and whether he objected to any of the rules ? When he should be proposed, every one present, who felt any objection to his admission, should state it fairly and fully: they who were received on trial were to be formed into distinct bands, and some experienced person chosen to assist them: and if no objection appeared to them after two months, they might then be admitted into the society. Every fourth Saturday was to be observed as a day of general intercession; and on the Sunday following a general love-feast was to be held from seven till ten in the evening. The last rule provided that no member should be allowed to act in any thing contrary to any order of the society, and that any person who did not conform to these orders, after being thrice admonished, should no longer be esteemed a member.

This association has been called the first Methodist society in London. Mr. Wesley distinguishes the origin of Methodism into three several periods. "The first rise of Methodism," says he, "was in November, 1729, when four of us met together at Oxford: the second was at Savannah in April 1736, when twenty or thirty persons met at my house: the last was at London, on this day, when forty or fifty of us agreed to meet together every Wednesday evening, in order to conversation, begun and ended with singing and prayer." This meeting was obviously a merely religious society, and hence Mr. Wesley, notwithstanding such a union with the Moravians, continued a member and minister of the Established Church, preaching in those pulpits to which he was invited, till all the churches were shut against him.

We now arrive at an important period in the life of the founder of Methodism, and concerning which there has been much diversity of opinion. We have already seen that Mr. Wesley had not attained that assurance of his pardon, and of the consequent favour of God toward him, which he found to be enjoyed by many with whom he associated: this led him to pray earnestly for this "best gift," and to resolve not to rest satisfied without it. His state of mind at this time he thus pathetically expresses: "I know every thought, every temper of my soul, ought to bear God's image and superscription. But how am I fallen from the glory of God! I feel that 'I am sold under sin.' I know that I, too, deserve nothing but wrath, being full of all abominations, and having no good thing in me to atone for them, or to remove the wrath of God. All my works, my righteousness, my prayers, need an atonement for themselves. So that my mouth is stopped. I have nothing to plead. God is holy; I am unholy. God is a consuming fire: I am altogether a sinner, meet to be consumed. Yet I hear a voice, (and is it not the voice of God?) saying, 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' O, let no one deceive us by vain words, as if we had already attained this faith! By its fruits we shall know. Do we already feel, 'peace with God,' and 'joy in the Holy Ghost?' Does his Spirit bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God? Alas! with mine he does not. O thou Saviour of men, save us from trusting in any thing but thee! Draw us after thee! Let us be emptied of ourselves, and then fill us with 'all peace and joy in believing, and let nothing separate us from thy love, in time or in eternity!'"

His deliverance from this distressing state of mind is thus related by himself. "On Wednesday, May 24th,

about five o'clock in the morning, I opened my Greek Testament on those words 'There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature,' 2 Pet. i. 4. Just as I went out, I opened it again on those words, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, 'Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice. O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? But there is mercy with thee, therefore thou shalt be feared. O Israel, trust in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.' In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed: I felt I did trust in Christ,—Christ alone for salvation: and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from 'the law of sin and death.' Immediately I began to pray with all my might for those who had, in a more especial manner, despitefully used me and persecuted me, and then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart." But it was not long before the enemy suggested "this cannot be faith, for where is thy joy?" After this he was often in heaviness through manifold temptations. Sometimes fear suddenly came upon him; fear, that he had deceived himself, and stopped short of that grace of God for which he had sought. Few helped, and many strove (most of them ignorantly) to hinder him; to cause him to cast "away that confidence which hath great recompence of reward."

Under these exercises of mind he determined to retire for a short time to Germany, to visit the Moravians at Hernhuth, that "conversing with those holy men who were themselves living witnesses of the full power of faith, and yet able to bear with those that are weak, might be a means, under God, of so establishing his soul that he might "go on from faith to faith, and from strength to strength." Having taken leave of his mother, he embarked at Gravesend, accompanied by Mr. Ingham. On the 15th of June he arrived at Rotterdam, and on the 15th of August at Hernhuth, the Moravian settlement in Upper Lusatia. Here he remained a fortnight, and left the Moravians, much strengthened by their religious advice and experience, and resolved to do and suffer whatever God should permit to come upon him in the prosecution of his great design of spending his life in testifying the gospel of the grace of God. On his return to London, he found the little society, which, during his absence, had been watched over by his brother Charles, consisting of thirty-two persons; and many other religious communities, in various parts of the town, received him gladly. He now embraced every opportunity of enforcing the truths of the gospel, and multitudes flocked to hear him preach. In the latter end of the year Mr. Whitefield returned from Georgia, and on his arrival in London he associated himself with Mr. Wesley and his little band. Most of the churches being now shut against them, they began, not without considerable reluctance, as it appears, to preach in the highways the glad tidings of the gospel. "When I was told I must preach no more in this, and this, and another church," says Mr. Wesley, "so much the more those who could not hear me there flocked together when I was at any of the societies; where I spoke more or less, though with much inconvenience, to as many as the room I was in would contain. But after a time, finding

those rooms could not contain a tenth part of the people that were earnest to hear, I determined to do the same thing in England which I had often done in a warmer climate, namely, when the house would not contain the congregation, to preach in the open air. This I accordingly did, first in Bristol, where the society-rooms were exceedingly small; and at Kingswood, where we had no room at all; afterward in or near London." At Bristol, whither he had been invited by Mr. Whitefield, many thousands attended his preaching: a society was speedily formed upon the same plan as the one in London: a visible change was effected in the lives of hundreds of the people, and on Saturday the 12th of May, 1739, the first stone of the first Methodist chapel was laid in this place. During his absence from London, various disputes had arisen in the society there, occasioned by several of the members having imbibed the notions that "the means of grace" are useless, or rather hinderances, to the attainment of true religion; that there are no degrees in faith; and that pious frauds are justifiable. Finding there was no time to delay without destroying what he believed to be the cause of God, he resolved to strike at the root of the grand delusion. Accordingly, every day, for a week in succession, he bore the most unequivocal testimony against these unscriptural, mischievous refinements, by which the majority of his former followers had been weaned from him, and from the simplicity of the gospel. This proving unavailing, and finding that the disaffected members laboured to pervert the few who continued faithful, he saw nothing remained but that he should give them up to God; which he did in the most solemn manner, on Sunday, July 20, 1740. Eighteen or nineteen persons withdrew with him. He now met his little society at the preaching-house in Moorfields, known by the name of the Foundry. In this place he also regularly preached. His

society rapidly increased: and he now found it requisite to draw up, jointly with his brother, rules for the government of his growing societies. These are known as the "Rules of the Methodist Society," and either are, or should be, presented to every member upon his admission among them.

For a considerable time Mr. Whitefield continued to labour in connection with the Wesleys; but upon his second visit to America he imbibed the doctrines termed Calvinistic; and on his return to England he could not join his old friends in the work of the ministry as before. This diversity of sentiment between these two eminent men soon gave rise to a controversy, which was conducted with good temper on both sides; and the result of which was, an agreement to differ, retaining their former friendship, and each endeavouring to effect as much good as possible. From this time their mutual regard and friendly intercourse suffered no interruption till Mr. Whitefield's death. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Wesley, who bore ample testimony to the undissembled piety, the ardent zeal, and the extensive usefulness, of his much loved and honoured friend.

As the people who had placed themselves under his care daily increased, he was involved in considerable difficulty for want of additional assistance in visiting and preaching. He had at first hoped that the ministers of the Establishment would have taken part in the business. In this, however, he was disappointed, which induced him to try other methods, and ultimately led to the appointment of lay-preachers.

Mr. Wesley having obtained several helpers, all of them men truly devoted to God, Methodism spread in every direction. It had now assumed some form and consistence. Chapels had been built, societies formed and disciplined, funds raised, rules enacted, lay-preachers admitted, and a regular system of itinerancy begun. And now, also, it had

to contend with much violent opposition. At Bristol, London, Wednesbury, Falmouth, Cornwall, and Sheffield, particularly, the persecution raged horribly, and many of the preachers, as well as Mr. Wesley, were frequently in imminent danger of their lives. So far from damping their ardour, however, this opposition appeared to give it a new zest: they bore onward "through evil and through good report," till many hundreds of their most violent and determined enemies became converts to Methodism, and ornaments to society.

We have now arrived at an important era in the history of Methodism, viz., the institution of that annual assembly of preachers which is known under the name of the Conference, in which every thing relative to the affairs of Methodism is examined and determined. In the year 1744 Mr. Wesley invited his brother Charles, four other clergymen, and four of his lay-preachers, to meet with him, for the purpose of regulating the circuits into which the various parts of the kingdom had been divided, and also for a review of their doctrine and discipline; as well as the examination into the moral conduct and fitness for the work of all the preachers in the connection.

The first conference was begun by recording their desire, "that all things might be considered as in the immediate presence of God; that they might meet with a single eye, and as little children who had every thing to learn; that every point which was proposed might be examined to the foundation; that every person might speak freely whatever was in his heart; and that every question which might arise should be thoroughly debated and settled." They observed, that there was no reason to be afraid of doing this, lest they should overturn their first principles; for if they were false, the sooner they were overturned the better; if they were true, they would bear the strictest examination. With regard to the judgment of the majority, they agreed that, in speculative things, each could only

submit so far as his judgment should be convinced; and that, in every practical point, each would submit so far as he could without wounding his conscience. Thus they laid the foundation for union in sentiment, without violating the principles of private judgment.

When about the age of fifty, Mr. Wesley entered into the marriage state with a Mrs. Vizelle, a widow lady, apparently of exemplary piety, and well adapted to become the partner of such a man. In the issue of this step, however, he was wofully disappointed: and after causing him twenty years of sore disquietude, she departed, never intending to return. Finding that this was her determination, Mr. Wesley remarks in his Journal, "I did not forsake her: I did not dismiss her: I will not recall her."

Having fully considered his situation, Mr. Wesley determined to continue in the course in which he had been honoured with so much success, and, girding up his strength, he pressed onward with renewed ardour. In the year 1751 he paid his first visit to Scotland. Here he stopped but a short time; but the congregations were numerous, many were cut to the heart, and several joined together in a little society. In October, 1753, he was visited with a dangerous illness, his life was despaired of, and not knowing how it might please God to dispose of him, and wishing "to prevent vile panegyric" in case of death, he wrote as follows:

HERE LIETH

THE BODY OF JOHN WESLEY,

A BRAND PLUCKED OUT OF THE BURNING:
WHO DIED OF A CONSUMPTION IN THE FIFTY-FIRST YEAR OF HIS AGE:
NOT LEAVING, AFTER HIS DEBTS ARE PAID,
TEN POUNDS BEHIND HIM;
PRAYING,

GOD BE MERCIFUL TO ME AN UNPROFITABLE SERVANT.

He ordered that this inscription, if any, should be placed on his tomb-stone. After being confined to his room for nearly four months, he began to recover, and was soon sufficiently strengthened to enter again on his work. It was during this period that he wrote his *Notes on the New Testament.*

The destructive errors of Antinomianism were at this time spreading extensively their baneful influence; nor did the Methodist societies wholly escape the contagion. They were not infected, however, to the extent which Mr. Southey seems to suppose: the discipline of Methodism opposed an insuperable barrier to this. In order to strengthen this bulwark against the overflowing of ungodliness, the evil principle which occasioned it became a matter of deep and serious consideration in the Conference of 1770, in the minutes of which, published shortly after, were inserted a series of propositions on the subject. This step was considered by the Calvinistic party as a signal for the commencement of hostilities. The controversy now fully commenced, and was continued for some time; but committed almost wholly to Mr. Fletcher, the pious vicar of Madely, who had previously espoused the cause of Mr. Wesley. Speaking of Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Southey says, "he was a man of rare talents, and rarer virtue. No age or country has ever produced a man of more fervent piety, or more perfect charity; no church has ever possessed a more apostolic minister." The controversy was carried on with much rancour by Augustus Toplady, a man of quick and lively intellect, but highly injudicious, hasty in forming conclusions, and intemperate in advancing them; much addicted to the use of coarse language, and disgustingly personal in all his attacks. All this, however, had no effect upon the heavenly minded Fletcher. The biographer just cited says of him, "If ever truly Christian charity was manifested in polemical writing, it was by

Fletcher of Madely. Even theological controversy never, in the slightest degree, irritated his heavenly temper. Upon the score of controversial offences few men have ever had so little need to ask forgiveness. When he offended his antagonists it was not by any personalities, or the slightest breathing of a malicious spirit, but by the ironical manner in which he displayed the real nature of their monstrous doctrines. Mr. Wesley, also, by the unanswerable manner in which he treated the Calvinistic question, drew upon himself the fierce resentment of a host of enemies. They were confounded, but they would not be convinced; and they assailed him with a degree of rancorous hatred which, even in theological controversy, has seldom, if ever, been exceeded."

In the year 1753 Mr. Wesley again visited Scotland; hundreds and thousands flocked to hear, and many were added to the societies. Preachers were now regularly appointed to labour here, and the influence of Methodism continued to spread, though not with that rapidity, or to that extent, which it did in England.

Hitherto the Methodist society in London had occupied the old Foundry at Moorfields as a place of worship; but on the 1st of April, 1777, Mr. Wesley laid the first stone of the chapel in the City-Road, which was opened for public worship on the first of November in the year following. In the year 1780 Mr. Wesley was engaged in a controversy with Father O'Leary, a Capuchin friar. It has been remarked, that "Mr. Wesley's propositions were a wall of adamant; and that Father O'Leary's arguments were as boiled peas shot against it." In the year 1783 Mr. Wesley visited Holland, where he was well received by many persons of the highest respectability. He repeated his visit in 1786, and preached in many of the churches, as well as in many private houses; but he did not, nor does it appear to have been any part of

his design in visiting that country, to form any societies there.

The year 1784 is remarkable in the annals of Methodism for the solidity given to its affairs by the deed of declaration enrolled in chancery, by which the numerous chapels in the connection were secured to the Conference, who, by the execution of this deed, became a legal body, and obtained the exclusive right of appointing preachers to the circuits and chapels. During this year also the interests of Methodism in America were much strengthened and extended by giving to that people the benefits of a full and regularly ordained Christian ministry. Methodism had been introduced into New-York by a local preacher who had removed thither from Ireland. A regular society was formed in 1768, and they resolved to build a preaching-house. About the same time another local preacher from Ireland settled in Frederick county, in Maryland, and, preaching there, formed some societies. Encouraged by their success, they wrote to Mr. Wesley for help, who sent to their assistance two of his itinerant preachers. These were followed by two more in 1771, and two more followed in 1773. When the war of the revolution became general in that country, those preachers who had espoused the British cause were obliged to return. Francis Asbury alone remained, who, however, was obliged to shelter himself, for two years, in the house of a friend, before he dared to venture abroad. Methodism, meantime, had been kept alive by a few native preachers. It even increased, notwithstanding all difficulties, and at the conference held at Philadelphia in the year 1777, it appeared that there were forty preachers in the different circuits, and about 7000 members in the societies, besides many hundreds of coloured persons who had been brought under the influence of their teaching. The society, however, as the war continued, was in danger of being broken up by their

deprivation of the sacraments. The clergy of the English establishment had left the country, and neither the Presbyterians, the Independents, nor the Baptists, would administer the ordinances of baptism, or the Lord's supper, to them, unless they would renounce their connection with Mr. Wesley, and join their respective churches. These necessities were met, on the part of some of the preachers, who took upon themselves to administer the sacraments. This caused a division among them: the party separating chose from among themselves three senior brethren, who ordained others by the imposition of hands. The breach, however, was afterward healed, the separatists returned to the society, and by the vote of a subsequent conference the ordination was declared invalid. This step left the people in the same situation as they were before. When peace was established with the mother country, the intercourse was opened between the societies in both countries. Mr. Wesley, being informed of the extreme uneasiness of the people's minds for want of the sacraments, and that thousands of their children were unbaptized, resolved upon drawing up a plan of church government, and of establishing an ordination for his American societies. At the conference of 1784, it was determined to send Dr. Coke and two other preachers to America. The two preachers were ordained presbyters by Mr. Wesley, with the assistance of Dr. Coke, and the Rev. Mr. Creighton; and Dr. Coke himself was ordained a superintendent or bishop, and received letters of ordination for America under the hand and seal of Mr. Wesley. The step thus taken for the purpose of giving an efficient ministry to the trans-atlantic Methodist churches has given occasion to much discussion. By some even of Mr. Wesley's best friends it was viewed as an unwarrantable stretch of authority, calculated to entail innumerable evils on the Methodist body: and by others it was regarded as the long-

looked-for renunciation of the authority of the church. It seems that Mr. Wesley submitted to this purely as an act of expediency, and did not adopt it as a matter of choice. He had been convinced, by the perusal of Lord King's book on the primitive church, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain: and viewing his people in America "as sheep without any shepherd," destitute of the ordinances of God and religion, he resolved to exercise the authority with which he believed himself to be scripturally invested. "For many years," he observes, "I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national church to which I belonged." In reply to his brother Charles, he says, "I firmly believe that I am a scriptural επισκοπος, as much as any man in England, or in Europe; for the UNINTERRUPTED SUCCESSION I know to be a fable which no man ever did or can prove. But this does, in no wise, interfere with my remaining in the Church of England; from which I have no more desire to separate than I had fifty years ago."

In the year 1787, Mr. Wesley visited the French islands. Methodism had been already introduced into them, and was rapidly spreading its influence. He preached at Alderney, Guernsey, and Jersey, to serious and deeply attentive congregations, and departed highly gratified with the result of his visit. In the following year Charles died, in the 79th year of his age. He had said, just before his dissolution, that his brother would not survive him above a year. Mr. Wesley paid little attention to this; but he seemed to think that, considering his years, and the symptoms of decay which he had marked in himself, such an event was highly probable. Deter-

mined, however, to "die in the harness," he continued to travel and preach as usual. While on a journey through Ireland he was attacked with a disorder from which he was never afterward fully relieved. His strength now diminished so much, that he found it difficult to preach more than twice a day; and for many weeks he abstained from his five o'clock morning sermons, because a slow and settled fever parched his mouth. Finding himself something better, he resumed the practice, and hoped to hold on a little longer: but at the beginning of the year 1790, he writes, "I am now an old man, decayed from head to foot. My eyes are dim; my right hand shakes much; my mouth is hot and dry every morning; I have a lingering fever almost every day; my motion is weak and slow. However, blessed be God! I do not slack my labours: I can preach and write still." He rose at his usual hour, four o'clock, and went through the many duties of the day, not, indeed, with the same apparent vigour, but without complaint, and with a degree of resolution that was astonishing. He would still, as he afterward remarks, "do a little for God before he dropped into the dust." In this manner he went on till the month of February, 1791, when he took cold after preaching at Lambeth. For some days he struggled against an increasing fever, and continued to preach, but daily became weaker and more lethargic; and on the second of March he died in peace, being in the eighty-eighth year of his age, and the sixty-fifth of his ministry. He was buried in a vault in the City-Road Chapel, whither he was followed by the tears and affectionate regrets of hundreds, who regarded him as their father in the gospel.

The limits assigned to this hasty sketch of the life of Wesley forbids any thing like a review of his character: we therefore conclude it with an observation of Mr. Nicholls, in his Literary Anecdotes, as highly honour-

able to both of the parties:—"This extraordinary man, though he was endowed with eminent talents, was more distinguished by their use than even by their possession. Though his taste was classic, and his manners elegant, he sacrificed that society in which he was peculiarly calculated to shine; gave up those preferments which his abilities might have obtained; and devoted a long life in practising and enforcing common duties. Instead of being 'an ornament to literature,' he was a blessing to his fellow-creatures; instead of being 'the genius of the age,' he was the servant of God."

The following is the inscription on the tomb-stone:

To the Memory of
THE VENERABLE JOHN WESLEY, A. M.
Late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.

This GREAT LIGHT arose,
(By the singular providence of God,)
To enlighten THESE NATIONS,
And to revive, enforce, and defend,
The pure apostolical DOCTRINE and PRACTICES of
the PRIMITIVE CHURCH:
Which he continued to do by his writings and labours,
For more than HALF A CENTURY,
And to his inexpressible joy,
Not only beheld their INFLUENCE extending,
And their EFFICACY witnessed,
In the hearts and lives of MANY THOUSANDS,
As well in the WESTERN WORLD, as in THESE
KINGDOMS;
But also, far above all human power or expectation,
lived to see PROVISION made, by the singular
Grace of GOD,
For their CONTINUANCE and ESTABLISHMENT,
TO THE JOY OF FUTURE GENERATIONS!

Reader, if thou art constrained to bless the INSTRUMENT, GIVE GOD THE GLORY!

After having languished a few days, He, at length, finished his course and his life together;
Gloriously triumphing over death,
March 2, An. Dom. 1791,
IN THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

On the marble tablet in the chapel is the following:

Sacred to the Memory
Of the REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.
Some time *Fellow of* LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.
A Man, in Learning and sincere Piety,
scarcely inferior to any:
In zeal, Ministerial labours, & extensive usefulness,
Superior (perhaps) to all Men
Since the days of ST. PAUL.
Regardless of fatigue, personal danger, & disgrace,
He went out into the highways and hedges,
Calling sinners to repentance,
And preaching the Gospel of peace.
He was the Founder of the METHODIST SOCIETIES;
The Patron and *Friend* of the Lay-preachers,
By whose aid he extended the plan of itinerant preaching
Through GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND,
The WEST INDIES and AMERICA,
With unexampled success.

He was born July 17th, 1703,
And died March 2nd, 1791,
In sure and certain hope of eternal life,
Through the atonement and mediation of a crucified Saviour.

He was sixty-five years in the Ministry,

And fifty-two an Itinerant Preacher:
He lived to see, in these KINGDOMS only,
About three hundred Itinerant,
And a thousand *Local* Preachers,
Raised up from the midst of his own people;
And eighty thousand persons in the Societies under his care.
His name will ever be held in grateful remembrance
by all who rejoice in the universal spread
of the Gospel of CHRIST.

SOLI DEO GLORIA.

Whatever diversity of sentiment may exist relative to the correctness of Mr. Wesley's views of Christian doctrine or ecclesiastical discipline, it is now pretty generally acknowledged that by his abundant labours he has been the instrument of effecting a vast and incalculable aggregate of moral good, which it is probable would have been effected by no other means. At the period when he entered upon his public labours, the nation was in an awful state of defection from the doctrines of the reformation. Socinianism and atheism were making rapid strides, and their attendant consequences, immorality and profaneness, had assumed a fearful aspect. To check and destroy these destructive evils was the great and uniform object which Wesley proposed to himself; and to accomplish which no labour was too great, and no suffering too severe. In the contemplation of this noble enterprise he relinquished the acquisition of every earthly good, and entered upon a course of unremitting toil. "Leisure and I," said he, "have taken leave of each other. I purpose to be busy as long as I live, if my health is so long indulged to me;" and never was resolution more punctually observed. His uniform prayer was, "Lord, let me never live to be useless—but may I

"My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live."

Of the result of these labours little need here be said. Of the tendency of his doctrines the reader will judge from the following sheets; but of their actual fruits a few words may be allowed. In estimating the moral effects of Methodism, it should not be forgotten that it was originally designed for the poor. The labours of Mr. Wesley were primarily directed to that class of society, for whom it might truly be said "no man cared." The prisons were the first scenes of his labours; and afterward, when the churches were shut against him, he, in the highways of the most depraved neighbourhoods called upon men "to repent, and do works meet for repentance." And upon these persons the most beneficial effects were immediately produced. In many cases of the most brutal depravity and habitual vice, the completest reformation was effected. To such cases, and they were by no means uncommon, the founder of Methodism appealed, and that successfully, in proof of its extraordinary character and holy tendency. "I appeal," said he, "to every candid, unprejudiced person, whether we may not discern all those signs (understanding the words in a spiritual sense) to which our Lord referred John's disciples: 'The blind receive their sight.' Those who were blind from their birth, unable to see their own deplorable state, and much more to see God, and the remedy he has prepared for them in the Son of his love, now see themselves, yea, and 'the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' The eyes of their understanding being now opened, they see all things clearly. 'The deaf hear.' Those that were before utterly deaf to all the outward and inward calls of God, now hear not only his providential calls, but also the whispers of his grace. 'The lame walk.' Those who never before arose from the earth, or moved one step to-

ward heaven, are now walking in all the ways of God; yea, running the race that is set before them. 'The lepers are cleansed.' The deadly leprosy of sin, which they brought with them into the world, and which no art of man could ever cure, is now clean departed from them. And surely never, in any age or nation since the apostles, have those words been so eminently fulfilled, 'the poor have the gospel preached unto them,' as they are at this day. At this day the gospel leaven, faith working by love, inward and outward holiness, or, (to use the terms of St. Paul,) righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, hath so spread in various parts of Europe, particularly in England, Scotland, Ireland, in the islands, in the north and south, from Georgia to New-England and Newfoundland, that sinners have been truly converted to God, thoroughly changed both in heart and in life, not by tens, or by hundreds only, but by thousands, yea, by myriads. The fact cannot be denied: we can point out the persons, with their names and places of abode; and yet the wise men of the world, the men of eminence, the men of learning and renown, cannot imagine what we mean by talking of any extraordinary work of God."

The case of the Kingswood colliers is well known. Out of the midst of a horde of the most barbarous savages a Christian church was raised, "whose faith is spoken of throughout all the world." In its immediate effects, the powerful principle of religion which Mr. Wesley and his preachers diffused, has reclaimed many from a course of sin, has supported many in poverty, sickness, and affliction, and has imparted to many a triumphant joy in death. Nor have the effects of Methodism been confined to the lower classes of society: it has leavened all ranks, and imparted its influence to all existing establishments. "In estimating the effects of Methodism," says Mr. Southey, "the good which it has done indirectly must not be

overlooked. As the Reformation produced a visible reform in those parts of Christendom where the Romish Church maintained its supremacy, so, though in a less degree, the progress of Wesley's disciples has been beneficial to our Establishment, exciting in many of the parochial clergy the zeal which was wanting. To the impulse also which was given by Methodism, that missionary spirit may be ascribed which is now carrying the light of the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth."

WESLEYANA.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

SECTION I.

Their Importance.

I AM a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God: just hovering over the great gulf; till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen! I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing, the way to heaven: how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book! O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri*, a man of one book. Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone: only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his book, for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does any thing appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights—Lord, is it not thy word, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God?" Thou "givest liberally, and upbraidest not." Thou hast said, "If any be willing to do thy will, he shall know." I am willing to do: let me know thy will. I then search after

and consider parallel passages of Scripture, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual."—*Sermons*, vol. i, Preface, page 19.

SECTION II.

Their Divine Inspiration.

THERE are four grand and powerful arguments which strongly induce us to believe that the Bible must be from God, viz., miracles, prophecies, the goodness of the doctrine, and the moral character of the penmen. All the miracles flow from divine power: all the prophecies from divine understanding; the goodness of the doctrine from divine goodness; and the moral character of the penmen from divine holiness.

Thus Christianity is built upon four grand pillars, viz., the power, understanding, goodness, and holiness of God. Divine power is the source of all the miracles; divine understanding, of all the prophecies; divine goodness, of the goodness of the doctrine; and divine holiness, of the moral character of the penmen.

I beg leave to propose a short, clear, and strong argument to prove the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

The Bible must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God.

1. It could not be the invention of good men or angels; for they neither could nor would make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, "Thus saith the Lord," when it was their own invention.

2. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils; for they would not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell to all eternity.

3. Therefore I draw this conclusion, that the Bible must be given by divine inspiration.—*Wesley's Works*, vol. vi, p. 554.

SECTION III.

The Christian Rule.

THE Christian rule of right and wrong is the word of God, the writings of the Old and New Testament; all that the prophets and "holy men of old" wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; all that scripture which was given by inspiration of God, and which is indeed profitable for doctrine, or teaching the whole will of God; for reproof of what is contrary thereto; for correction of error, and for instruction, or training us up in righteousness. 2 Tim. iii. 16.

This is a lantern unto a Christian's feet, and a light in all his paths. This alone he receives as his rule of right or wrong, of whatever is really good or evil. He esteems nothing good but what is here enjoined, either directly or by plain consequence; he accounts nothing evil but what is here forbidden, either in terms, or by undeniable inference. Whatever the Scripture neither forbids nor enjoins, either directly or by plain consequence, he believes to be of an indifferent nature; to be in itself neither good nor evil; this being the whole and sole outward rule whereby his conscience is to be directed in all things.

And if it be directed thereby, in fact, then hath he "the answer of a good conscience toward God." "A good conscience" is what is elsewhere termed by the apostle "a conscience void of offence." So, what he at one time expresses thus, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day," Acts xxiii, 1, he denotes at another by that expression, "Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man," chap. xxiv, 16. Now in order to this there is absolutely required, first, a right understanding of the word of God, of his "holy, and acceptable, and perfect

will," concerning us as it is revealed therein. For it is impossible we should walk by a rule if we do not know what it means. There is, secondly, required (which how few have attained!) a true knowledge of ourselves; a knowledge both of our hearts and lives, of our inward tempers and outward conversation: seeing, if we know them not, it is not possible that we should compare them with our rule. There is required, thirdly, an agreement of our hearts and lives, of our tempers and conversation, of our thoughts, and words, and works, with that rule, with the written word of God. For, without this, if we have any conscience at all, it can be only an evil conscience. There is, fourthly, required an inward perception of this agreement with our rule: and this habitual perception, this inward consciousness itself, is properly *a good conscience;* or, in the other phrase of the apostle, "a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man."—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 102, 103.

Standing revelation is the best means of rational conviction; far preferable to any of those extraordinary means which some imagine would be more effectual. It is therefore our wisdom to avail ourselves of this; to make full use of it; so that it may be a lantern to our feet, and a light in all our paths. Let us take care that our whole heart and life be conformable thereto; that it be the constant rule of all our tempers, all our words, and all our actions. So shall we preserve in all things the testimony of a good conscience toward God: and when our course is finished, we too shall be "carried by angels into Abraham's bosom."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 423.

SECTION IV.

Understood by the help of Reason.

THE foundation of true religion stands upon the oracles of God. It is built upon the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. Now of what excellent use is reason, if we would either understand ourselves, or explain to others, those living oracles. And how is it possible, without it, to understand the essential truths contained therein? A beautiful summary of which we have in that which is called the Apostles' Creed. Is it not reason, (assisted by the Holy Ghost,) which enables us to understand what the Holy Scriptures declare concerning the being and attributes of God; concerning his eternity and immensity; his power, wisdom, and holiness? It is by reason that God enables us, in some measure, to comprehend his method of dealing with the children of men; the nature of his various dispensations, of the old and new covenant, of the law and the gospel. It is by this we understand (his Spirit opening and enlightening the eyes of our understanding) what that repentance is, not to be repented of; what is that faith whereby we are saved; what is the nature and the condition of justification; what are the immediate, and what the subsequent fruits of it. By reason we learn what is that new birth, without which we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; and what that holiness is, without which no man shall see the Lord. By the due use of reason we come to know what are the tempers implied in inward holiness, and what it is to be outwardly holy, holy in all manner of conversation: in other words, what is the mind that was in Christ; and what it is to walk as Christ walked.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 128, 129.

CHAPTER II.

OF RELIGION.

SECTION I.

The Christian System described.

WHAT is real, genuine Christianity? whether we speak of it as a principle in the soul, or as a scheme or system of doctrine?

Christianity, taken in the latter sense, is that system of doctrine which describes the character above recited, [a perfect Christian,] which promises it shall be mine, (provided I will not rest till I attain,) and which tells me how I may attain it.

First, It *describes* this character in all its parts, and that in the most lively and affecting manner. The main lines of this picture are beautifully drawn in many passages of the Old Testament. These are filled up in the New, retouched and finished with all the art of God. The same we have in miniature more than once; particularly in the thirteenth chapter of the former epistle to the Corinthians, and in that discourse which St. Matthew records as delivered by our Lord at his entrance upon his public ministry.

Secondly, Christianity *promises* this character shall be mine, if I will not rest till I attain it. This is promised in the Old Testament and the New. Indeed the New is, in effect, all promise; seeing every description of the servants of God mentioned therein has the nature of a command, in consequence of those general injunctions, "Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ," 1 Cor. xi, 1. "Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," Heb. vi, 12. And every command has the force of a promise in virtue of those general promises, "A new heart will I give you, and I will put

my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them," Ezek. xxxvi, 26, 27. "This is the covenant that I will make after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts," Heb. viii, 10. Accordingly, when it is said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," Matt. xxii, 37, it is not only a direction what I shall do, but a promise of what God will do in me; exactly equivalent with what is written elsewhere, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul," Deut. xxx, 6.

This being observed, it will readily appear to every serious person who reads the New Testament with that care which the importance of the subject demands, that every particular branch of the preceding character is manifestly promised therein; either explicitly, under the form of a promise; or virtually, under that of description or command.

Christianity tells me, in the third place, how I may attain the promise, namely, by faith. But what is faith? Not an opinion, no more than it is a form of words; not any number of opinions put together, be they ever so true. A string of opinions is no more Christian faith, than a string of beads is Christian holiness.

It is not an assent to any opinion, or any number of opinions. A man may assent to three, or three and twenty creeds: he may assent to all the Old and New Testament, (at least so far as he understands them,) and yet have no Christian faith at all.

The faith by which the promise is attained is represented by Christianity as a power wrought by the Almighty in an immortal spirit, inhabiting a house of clay, to see through that veil into the world of spirits, into things in-

visible and eternal: a power to discern those things which, with eyes of flesh and blood, no man hath seen or can see; either by reason of their nature, which (though they surround us on every side) is not perceivable by these gross senses; or by reason of their distance, as being yet afar off in the bosom of eternity.

This is Christian faith in the general notion of it. In its more particular notion, it is a divine evidence or conviction wrought in the heart, that God is reconciled to *me* through his Son: inseparably joined with a confidence in him as a gracious, reconciled Father, as for all things, so especially for all those good things which are invisible and eternal.

To believe (in the Christian sense) is, then, to walk in the light of eternity: and to have a clear sight of, and confidence in the Most High, reconciled to me through the Son of his love.

Now how highly desirable is such a faith, were it only on its own account! For how little does the wisest of men know of any thing more than he can see with his eyes! What clouds and darkness cover the whole scene of things invisible and eternal! What does he know even of himself as to this invisible part? What of his future manner of existence? How melancholy an account does the prying, learned philosopher, (perhaps the wisest and best of all heathens,) the great, the venerable Marcus Antoninus give of these things? What was the result of all his serious researches? Of his high and deep contemplations? "Either dissipation (of the soul as well as the body, into the common, unthinking mass,) or reabsorption into the universal fire, the unintelligent source of all things: or some unknown manner of conscious existence after the body sinks to rise no more." One of these three he supposed must succeed death, but which, he had no light to determine. Poor Antoninus! With all his wealth, his

honour, his power! With all his wisdom and philosophy!

> "What points of knowledge did he gain?
> That life is sacred all—and vain!
> Sacred how high! And vain how low!
> He could not tell—but died to know."

He died to know! And so must you, unless you are now a partaker of Christian faith. O consider this! Nay, and consider how little you know of the immensity of the things that are beyond sense and time, but how uncertainly do you know even that little! How faintly glimmering a light is that you have! Can you properly be said to *know* any of these things? Is that knowledge any more than bare conjecture? And the reason is plain. You have no senses suitable to invisible or eternal objects. What *desiderata* then, especially to the rational, the reflecting part of mankind, are these? A more extensive knowledge of things invisible and eternal: a greater certainty in whatever knowledge of them we have; and, in order to both, faculties capable of discerning things invisible.

Is it not so? Let impartial reason speak. Does not every thinking man want a window, not so much in his neighbour's, as in his own breast? He wants an opening there, of whatever kind, that might let in light from eternity. He is pained to be thus feeling after God so darkly, so uncertainly; to know so little of God, and indeed so little of any beside material objects. He is concerned that he must see that little, not directly, but in the dim, sullied glass of sense; and consequently so imperfectly and obscurely that it is all a mere enigma still.

Now these very *desiderata* faith supplies. It gives a more extensive knowledge of things invisible, showing what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither could it before enter into our heart to conceive. And all these it shows in the clearest light, with the fullest certainty and

evidence. For it does not leave us to receive our notice of them by mere reflection from the dull glass of sense; but resolves a thousand enigmas of the highest concern, by giving faculties suited to things invisible. O, who would not wish for such a faith, were it only on these accounts! How much more, if by this I may receive the promise, I may attain all that holiness and happiness.

So Christianity tells me; and so I find it, may every real Christian say. I now am assured that these things are so; I experience them in my own breast. What Christianity (considered as a doctrine) promised is accomplished in my soul. And Christianity, considered as an inward principle, is the completion of all those promises. It is holiness and happiness, the image of God impressed on a created spirit; a fountain of peace and love springing up into everlasting life.—*Letter to the Rev. Dr. Middleton*, vol. v, pp. 756–758.

SECTION II.

Nature of true Religion.

The religion of Jesus Christ is *Θεραπεια Ψυχης*, God's method of *healing a soul* which is thus diseased. Hereby the great Physician of souls applies medicines to heal this sickness; to restore human nature, totally corrupted in all its faculties. God heals all our atheism by the knowledge of himself, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; by giving us faith, a divine evidence and conviction of God, and of the things of God; in particular, of this important truth, "Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*." By repentance and lowliness of heart, the deadly disease of pride is healed; that of self-will by resignation, a meek and thankful submission to the will of God; and for the love of the world in all its branches, the love of

God is the sovereign remedy. Now this is properly religion, "faith [thus] working by love;" working the genuine meek humility, entire deadness to the world, with a loving, thankful acquiescence in, and conformity to, the whole will and word of God.—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 398.

True religion is right tempers toward God and man. It is, in two words, gratitude and benevolence; gratitude to our Creator and supreme benefactor, and benevolence to our fellow-creatures. In other words, it is the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves.

It is in consequence of our knowing God loves us, that we love him, and love our neighbour as ourselves. Gratitude towards our Creator cannot but produce benevolence to our fellow-creatures. The love of Christ constrains us not only to be harmless, to do no ill to our neighbour, but to be useful, to be "zealous of good works;" "as we have time, to do good unto all men;" and to be patterns to all, of true genuine morality; of justice, mercy, and truth. This is religion, and this is happiness; the happiness for which we were made. This begins when we begin to know God, by the teaching of his own Spirit. As soon as the Father of spirits reveals his Son in our hearts, and the Son reveals his Father, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts; then, and not till then, we are happy. We are happy, first, In the consciousness of his favour, which indeed is better than life itself; next, In the constant communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; then, In all the heavenly tempers which he hath wrought in us by his Spirit; again, In the testimony of his Spirit, that all our works please him; and lastly, In the testimony of our own spirits, that "in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world." Standing fast in this liberty from sin and sorrow, wherewith Christ hath made them free, real Christians "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks."

And their happiness still increases as they "grow up into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

There can be no doubt but from this love to God and man, a suitable conversation will follow. His "communication," that is, discourse, will "be always in grace, seasoned with salt, and meet to minister grace to the hearers." He will always "open his mouth with wisdom, and there will be on his tongue the law of kindness." Hence his affectionate words will "distil as the dew, and as the rain upon the tender herb." And men will know "it is not he only that speaks, but the Spirit of the Father that speaketh in him." His actions will spring from the same source with his words, even from the abundance of a loving heart. And while all these aim at the glory of God, and tend to this one point, whatever he does he may truly say,—

> "End of my every action thou,
> In all things thee I see:
> Accept my hallow'd labour now,
> I do it as to thee."

Sermons, vol. ii, pp. 432, 434.

Here then we see, in the clearest, strongest light, what is real religion: A restoration of man, by Him that bruises the serpent's head, to all that the old serpent deprived him of; a restoration, not only to the favour, but likewise to the image of God, implying not barely deliverance from sin, but the being filled with the fulness of God. It is plain, if we attend to the preceding considerations, that nothing short of this is Christian religion. Every thing else, whether negative or external, is utterly wide of the mark. But what a paradox is this! How little is it understood in the Christian world; yea, in this enlightened age, wherein it is taken for granted the world is wiser than ever it was from the beginning! Among all our discoveries, who has discovered this? How few, either among

the learned or unlearned! And yet, if we believe the Bible, who can deny it? Who can doubt of it? It runs through the Bible from the beginning to the end, in one connected chain; and the agreement of every part of it with every other, is, properly, the analogy of faith. Beware of taking any thing else, or any thing less than this, for religion! Not *any thing else*. Do not imagine an outward form, a round of duties, both in public and private, is religion! Do not suppose that honesty, justice, and whatever is called *morality*, (though excellent in its place,) is religion! And least of all dream that orthodoxy, right opinion, (vulgarly called *faith*,) is religion. Of all religious dreams, this is the vainest; which takes hay and stubble for gold tried in the fire.

O do not take *any thing less than this* for the religion of Jesus Christ! Do not take a part of it for the whole. What God hath joined together put not asunder. Take no less for his religion than the "faith that worketh by love;" all inward and outward holiness. Be not content with any religion which does not imply the destruction of all the works of the devil; that is, of all sin. We know weakness of understanding, and a thousand infirmities, will remain while this corruptible body remains; but sin need not remain: this is that work of the devil, eminently so called, which the Son of God was manifested to destroy in this present life. He is able, he is willing, to destroy it now in all that believe in him. Only be not straitened in your own bowels. Do not distrust his power, or his love. Put his promise to the proof. He hath spoken, and is he not ready likewise to perform? Only "come boldly to the throne of grace," trusting in his mercy, and you shall find "He saveth to the uttermost all those that come to God through him."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 73, 74.

This alone is religion, truly so called: this alone is, in the sight of God, of great price. The apostle sums it all

up in three particulars, "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And, first, *righteousness*. We cannot be at a loss concerning this, if we remember the words of our Lord, describing the two grand branches thereof, on which "hang all the law and the prophets:" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment," Mark xii, 30, the first and great branch of Christian righteousness. Thou shalt delight thyself in the Lord thy God; thou shalt seek and find all happiness in him. He shall be "thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward," in time and in eternity. All thy bones shall say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee!" Thou shalt hear, and fulfil His word who saith, "My son, give me thy heart." And having given him thy heart, thy inmost soul, to reign there without a rival, thou mayest well cry out, in the fulness of thy heart "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my strong rock, and my defence: my saviour, my God, and my might, in whom I will trust; my buckler, the horn also of my salvation, and my refuge."

And the second commandment is like unto this: the second great branch of Christian righteousness is closely and inseparably connected therewith; even "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." *Thou shalt love*,—thou shalt embrace with the most tender good will, the most earnest and cordial affection, the most inflamed desires of preventing or removing all evil, and of procuring for him every possible good,—*thy neighbour;* that is, not only thy friend, thy kinsman, or thy acquaintance: not only the virtuous, the friendly, him that loves thee, that prevents or returns thy kindness; but every child of man, every human creature, every soul which God hath made; not excepting him whom thou never hast seen in the

flesh, whom thou knowest not, either by face or name; not excepting him whom thou knowest to be evil and unthankful, him that still despitefully uses and persecutes thee: him thou shalt love *as thyself;* with the same invariable thirst after his happiness in every kind; the same unwearied care to screen him from whatever might grieve or hurt either his soul or body.

Now is not this love "the fulfilling of the law?" the sum of all Christian righteousness—of all inward righteousness; for it necessarily implies "bowels of mercy, humbleness of mind," (seeing "love is not puffed up,") "gentleness, meekness, long-suffering," (for love "is not provoked;" but believeth, hopeth, endureth all things:") and of all outward righteousness; for "love worketh no ill to his neighbour," either by word or deed. It cannot willingly either hurt or grieve any one. And it is zealous of good works. Every lover of mankind, as he hath opportunity, "doeth good unto all men," being (without partiality and without hypocrisy) "full of mercy and good fruits."

But true religion, or a heart right toward God and man, implies happiness, as well as holiness: for it is not only righteousness, but also "peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." What peace? *The peace of God*, which God only can give, and the world cannot take away; the peace which "passeth all understanding," all (barely) rational conception; being a supernatural sensation, a divine taste of "the powers of the world to come;" such as the natural man knoweth not, how wise soever in the things of this world, nor, indeed, can he know it in its present state, "because it is spiritually discerned." It is a peace that banishes all doubt, all painful uncertainty; the Spirit of God bearing witness with the spirit of a Christian, that he is *a child of God.* And it banishes fear, all such fear as hath torment; the fear of the wrath of God; the fear of

hell; the fear of the devil; and, in particular, the fear of death: he that hath the peace of God desiring, if it were the will of God, "to depart and to be with Christ."

With this peace of God, wherever it is fixed in the soul, there is also "*joy in the Holy Ghost;*" joy wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, by the ever blessed Spirit of God. He it is that worketh in us that calm, humble rejoicing in God, through Christ Jesus, "by whom we have now received the atonement," καταλλαγην, the reconciliation with God; and that enables us boldly to confirm the truth of the royal psalmist's declaration, "Blessed is the man," (or rather *happy,*) אשריהיש, "whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered." He it is that inspires the Christian soul with that even, solid joy which arises from the testimony of the Spirit that he is a child of God; and that gives him to "rejoice with joy unspeakable in hope of the glory of God;" hope both of the glorious image of God, which is, in part, and shall be fully "revealed in him," and of that crown of glory which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for him.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 62, 63.

By religion I mean the love of God and man, filling the heart and governing the life. The sure effect of this is, the uniform practice of justice, mercy, and truth. This is the very essence of it; the height and depth of religion, detached from this or that opinion, and from all particular modes of worship.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 360.

What is religion then? It is easy to answer, if we consult the oracles of God. According to these, it lies in one single point: it is neither more nor less than love: it is love which "is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment." Religion is the love of God and our neighbour; that is, every man under heaven. This love ruling the whole life, animating all our tempers and pas-

sions, directing all our thoughts, words, and actions, is "pure religion and undefiled."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 228.

SECTION III.

Its Fruits.

In a Christian believer *love* sits upon the throne which is erected in the inmost soul: namely, love of God and man, which fills the whole heart, and reigns without a rival. In a circle near the throne are all holy tempers; long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, fidelity, temperance: and if there be any other, they are comprised in "the mind which was in Christ Jesus." In an exterior circle are all the *works of mercy*, whether to the souls or bodies of men. By these we exercise all holy tempers; by these we continually improve them; so that all these are real means of grace, although this is not commonly adverted to. Next to these are those that are usually termed works of piety: reading and hearing the word, public, family, and private prayer, receiving the Lord's supper, fasting, or abstinence. Lastly, that his followers may the more effectually provoke one another to love, holy tempers, and good works, our blessed Lord has united them together in one body, the church, dispersed all over the earth; a little emblem of which, of the church universal, we have in every particular Christian congregation.

This is that religion which our Lord has established upon earth ever since the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. This is the entire, connected system of Christianity; and thus the several parts of it rise one above another, from that lowest point, the assembling ourselves together, to the highest, love enthroned in the heart. And hence it is easy to learn the comparative value of every branch of religion.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 289.

SECTION IV.

Its Design.

The great end of religion is to renew our hearts in the image of God, to repair that total loss of righteousness and true holiness which we sustained by the sin of our first parents.—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 399.

SECTION V.

Its Happiness.

As there is but one God in heaven above and in the earth beneath, so there is only one happiness for created spirits, either in heaven or earth. This one God made our heart for himself, and it cannot rest till it resteth in him. It is true that while we are in the vigour of youth and health; while our blood dances in our veins; while the world smiles upon us, and we have all the conveniences, yea, and superfluities of life, we frequently have pleasing dreams, and enjoy a kind of happiness. But it cannot continue; it flies away like a shadow: and even while it does, it is not solid or substantial: it does not satisfy the soul. We still pant after something else, something which we have not. Give a man every thing that this world can give, still, as Horace observed near two thousand years ago,

Curtæ nescio quid semper abest rei.

Still,

"Amidst our plenty something still,
To me, to thee, to him is wanting."

That *something* is neither more nor less than the knowledge and love of God; without which no spirit can be happy either in heaven or earth.

This happy knowledge of the true God is only another name for religion, I mean Christian religion; which indeed

is the only one that deserves the name. Religion, as to the nature or essence of it, does not lie in this or that set of notions, vulgarly called *faith;* nor in a round of duties, however carefully *reformed* from error and superstition. It does not consist in any number of outward actions. No: it properly and directly consists in the knowledge and love of God, as manifested in the Son of his love, through the eternal Spirit. And this naturally leads to every heavenly temper, and to every good word and work.

None but a Christian is happy: none but a real inward Christian. A glutton, a drunkard, a gamester, may be *merry;* but he cannot be happy. The beau, the belle, may eat and drink, and rise up to play; but still they feel they are not happy. Men or women may adorn their own dear persons with all the colours of the rainbow. They may dance, and sing, and hurry to and fro, and flutter hither and thither. They may roll up and down in their splendid carriages, and talk insipidly to each other. They may hasten from one diversion to another: but happiness is not there. They are still "walking in a vain shadow, and disquieting themselves in vain." One of their own poets has truly pronounced concerning the whole life of these sons of pleasure,—

> "'Tis a dull farce, an empty show:
> Powder, and pocket-glass, and beau."

I cannot but observe of that fine writer, [Matthew Prior] that he came near the mark; and yet he fell short of it. In his Solomon (one of the noblest poems in the English tongue) he clearly shows where happiness *is not;* that it is not to be found in natural knowledge, in power, or in the pleasures of sense or imagination. But he does not show where it is to be found. He could not; for he did not know it himself. Yet he came near it when he said,

> "Restore, great Father, thy instructed son;
> And in my act may thy great will be done!"

Every Christian is happy; and he who is not happy is not a Christian. If, as was observed above, religion is happiness, every one that has it must be happy. This appears from the very nature of the thing: for if religion and happiness are in fact the same, it is impossible that any man can possess the former without possessing the latter also. He cannot have religion without having happiness, seeing they are utterly inseparable.

And it is equally certain, on the other hand, that he who is not happy is not a Christian: seeing, if he were a real Christian, he could not but be happy. But I allow an exception here in favour of those who are under violent temptation; yea, and of those who are under deep nervous disorders, which are indeed a species of insanity. The clouds and darkness which then overwhelm the soul suspend its happiness; especially if Satan is permitted to second those disorders by pouring in his fiery darts. But, excepting these cases, the observation will hold, and it should be well attended to,—Whoever is not happy, yea, happy in God, is not a Christian.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 181–183.

CHAPTER III.

OF GOD.

SECTION I.

Distinction of Persons in the Godhead.

"THERE are three that bear record in heaven; and these three are one." I believe this *fact*, (if I may use the expression,) that God is Three and One. But the *manner how*, I do not comprehend; and I do not believe it. Now in this, in the *manner*, lies the mystery: and so it may: I have no concern with it: it is no object of my faith: I

believe just so much as God has revealed, and no more. But this, the *manner*, he has not revealed; therefore I believe nothing about it. But would it not be absurd in me to deny the fact, because I do not understand the manner? That is, to reject *what God has revealed*, because I do not comprehend *what he has not revealed?*

This is a point much to be observed. There are many things "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." Part of these God hath "revealed to us by his Spirit:"—"*revealed;*" that is, unveiled, uncovered: that part he requires us to believe. Part of them he has not revealed: that we need not, and, indeed, cannot believe: it is far above, out of our sight.

Now where is the wisdom of rejecting what is revealed, because we do not understand what is not revealed? Of denying the *fact*, which God has unveiled, because we cannot see the *manner*, which is veiled still?

Especially when we consider that what God has been pleased to reveal upon this head is far from being a point of indifference; is a truth of the last importance. It enters into the very heart of Christianity: it lies at the root of all vital religion.

Unless these Three are One, how can "all men honour the Son even as they honour the Father?" "I know not what to do," says Socinus in a letter to a friend, "with my untoward followers: they will not worship Jesus Christ. I tell them, it is written, 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' They answer, However that be, if he is not God, we dare not worship him. For 'it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.'"

But the thing which I here particularly mean, is this: the knowledge of the Three-One God is interwoven with all true Christian faith; with all vital religion.

I do not say that every real Christian can say, with the Marquis de Renty, "I bear about with me continually an experimental verity, and a plenitude of the presence of the ever blessed Trinity." I apprehend this is not the experience of "babes," but rather of "fathers in Christ."

But I know not how any one can be a Christian believer till he "hath [as St. John speaks] the witness in himself;" till "the Spirit of God witnesses with his spirit that he is a child of God;" that is, in effect, till God the Holy Ghost witnesses that God the Father has accepted him through the merits of God the Son; and, having this witness, he honours the Son, and the blessed Spirit, "even as he honours the Father."

Not that every Christian believer *adverts* to this; perhaps, at first, not one in twenty: but if you ask any of them a few questions, you will easily find it implied in what he believes.

Therefore I do not see how it is possible for any to have vital religion who denies that these Three are One. And all my hope for them is, not that they will be saved during their unbelief, (unless on the footing of honest heathens, upon the plea of invincible ignorance,) but that God, before they go hence, will "bring them to the knowledge of the truth."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 23, 24.

SECTION II.

His Eternity.

Who can search out this God to perfection? None of the creatures that he has made. Only some of his attributes he has been pleased to reveal to us in his word. Hence we learn, that God is an eternal Being. "His goings forth are from everlasting," and will continue to everlasting. As he ever was, so he ever will be; as there was no beginning of his existence, so there will be no end.

This is universally allowed to be contained in his very name, JEHOVAH; which the Apostle John accordingly renders, "He that was, and that is, and that is to come." Perhaps it would be as proper to say, "He is from everlasting to everlasting."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 429.

SECTION III.

His Knowledge and Wisdom.

SOME apprehend the wisdom and knowledge of God to mean one and the same thing. Others believe that the wisdom of God more directly refers to his appointing the ends of all things, and his knowledge to the means which he hath prepared and made conducive to those ends. The former seems to be the most natural explication; as the wisdom of God, in its most extensive meaning, must include the one as well as the other; the means as well as the ends.

Now the wisdom, as well as the power of God, is abundantly manifested in his creation; in the formation and arrangement of all his works, in heaven above and in the earth beneath; and in adapting them all to the several ends for which they were designed: insomuch that each of them, apart from the rest, is good; but all together *very good:* all conspiring together, in one connected system, to the glory of God in the happiness of his intelligent creatures.

As this wisdom appears even to short-sighted men (and much more to spirits of a higher order) in the creation and disposition of the whole universe, and every part of it; so it equally appears in their preservation, in his "upholding all things by the word of his power." And it no less eminently appears in the permanent government of all that he has created. How admirably does his wisdom direct the motions of the heavenly bodies; of all the stars

in the firmament, whether those that are fixed, or those that wander, though never out of their several orbits; of the sun in the midst of heaven; of those amazing bodies, the comets, that shoot in every direction through the immeasurable fields of ether! How does he superintend all the parts of this lower world, this "speck of creation," the earth! So that all things are still, as they were at the beginning, "beautiful in their seasons;" and summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, regularly follow each other. Yea, all things serve their Creator: "fire and hail, snow and vapour, wind and storm, are fulfilling his word:" so that we may well say, "O Lord our Governor, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"

Equally conspicuous is the wisdom of God in the government of nations, of states, and kingdoms; yea rather, more conspicuous, if infinite can be allowed to admit of any degrees. For the whole inanimate creation, being totally passive and inert, can make no opposition to his will. Therefore, in the natural world, all things roll on in an even uninterrupted course. But it is far otherwise in the moral world. Here evil men and evil spirits continually oppose the divine will, and create numberless irregularities. Here therefore is full scope for the exercise of all the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, in counteracting all the wickedness and folly of men, and all the subtlety of Satan, to carry on his own glorious design, the salvation of lost mankind. Indeed, were He to do this by an absolute decree, and by his own irresistible power, it would imply no wisdom at all. But his wisdom is shown by saving man in such a manner as not to destroy his nature, nor to take away the liberty which he has given him.

But the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God are most eminently displayed in his church: in planting it like a grain of mustard-seed, the least of all seeds; in preserving and continually increasing it till it

grew into a great tree, notwithstanding the uninterrupted opposition of all the powers of darkness. This the apostle justly terms *the manifold wisdom* (πολυποικιλος σοφια) *of God.* It is an uncommonly expressive word, intimating that this wisdom, in the manner of its operation, is diversified a thousand ways, and exerts itself with infinite varieties. These things the highest "angels desire to look into," but can never fully comprehend. It seems to be with regard to these chiefly that the apostle utters that strong exclamation, "How unsearchable are his judgments!" His counsels, designs, impossible to be fathomed; "and his ways" of accomplishing them "past finding out!" Impossible to be traced. According to the psalmist, "His paths are in the deep waters, and his footsteps are not known."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 108, 109.

The almighty, all-wise God sees and knows, from everlasting to everlasting, all that is, that was, and that is to come, through one eternal now. With him nothing is either past or future, but all things equally present. He has therefore, if we speak according to the truth of things, no foreknowledge, no afterknowledge. This would be ill consistent with the apostle's words, "With him is no variableness nor shadow of turning;" and with the account he gives of himself by the prophet, "I the Lord change not." Yet when he speaks to us, knowing whereof we are made, knowing the scantiness of our understanding, he lets himself down to our capacity, and speaks of himself after the manner of men. Thus, in condescension to our weakness, he speaks of his own purpose, counsel, plan, foreknowledge. Not that God has any need of counsel, of purpose, or of planning his work beforehand. Far be it from us to impute these to the Most High; to measure him by ourselves. It is merely in compassion to us that he speaks thus of himself as foreknowing the things in heaven or earth, and as predestinating or foreordaining

them. But can we possibly imagine that these expressions are to be taken literally? To one who was so gross in his conceptions might he not say, "Thinkest thou I am such a one as thyself?" Not so: as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than thy ways. I know, decree, work, in such a manner as it is not possible for thee to conceive: but to give thee some faint, glimmering knowledge of my ways, I use the language of men, and suit myself to thy apprehensions, in this thy infant state of existence."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 41.

SECTION IV.

His Omnipresence.

THIS subject is too vast to be comprehended by the narrow limits of the human understanding. We can only say, the great God, the eternal, the almighty Spirit, is as unbounded in his presence as in his duration and power. In condescension, indeed, to our weak understanding, he is said to dwell in heaven: but, strictly speaking, the heaven of heavens cannot contain him; but he is in every part of his dominion. The universal God dwelleth in universal space: so that we may say,

> "Hail, FATHER! whose creating call
> Unnumber'd worlds attend;
> JEHOVAH, comprehending all,
> Whom none can comprehend."

If we may dare attempt the illustrating this a little further: what is the space occupied by a grain of sand, compared to that space which is occupied by the starry heaven? It is as a cipher; it is nothing; it vanishes away in the comparison. What is it then to the whole expanse of space, to which the whole creation is infinitely less than a grain of sand? And yet this space, to which the whole creation bears no proportion at all, is infinitely less

in comparison of the great God, than a grain of sand, yea, a millionth part of it, is to that whole space.

This seems to be the plain meaning of those solemn words which God spake of himself: "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" And these sufficiently prove his omnipresence: which may be further proved from this consideration: God acts everywhere, and, therefore, is everywhere: for it is an utter impossibility that any being, created or uncreated, should work where it is not. God acts in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, throughout the whole compass of his creation; by sustaining all things, without which every thing would in an instant sink into its primitive nothing; by governing all, every moment superintending every thing that he has made; strongly and sweetly influencing all, and yet without destroying the liberty of his rational creatures. The very heathens acknowledged, that the great God governs the large and conspicuous parts of the universe; that he regulates the motions of the heavenly bodies, of the sun, moon, and stars; that he is

Totam
Mens agitans molem, et magno se corpore miscens:

"The all-informing Soul
That fills, pervades, and actuates the whole."

But they had no conception of his having a regard to the least things as well as the greatest; of his presiding over all that he has made, and governing atoms as well as worlds. This we could not have known, unless it had pleased God to reveal it unto us himself. Had he not himself told us so, we should not have dared to think that "not a sparrow falleth to the ground without the will of our Father which is in heaven;" and much less affirm that "even the very hairs of our head are all numbered."

This comfortable truth that "God filleth heaven and earth," we learn also from the psalmist above recited:

"If I climb up into heaven, thou art there; if I go down to hell, thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy hand shall lead me." The plain meaning is, If I remove to any distance whatever, thou art there; thou still besettest me, and layest thy hand upon me. Let me flee to any conceivable or inconceivable distance, above, beneath, or on any side; it makes no difference; thou art still equally there: in thee I still "live, and move, and have my being."

And where no creature is, still God is there. The presence or absence of any or all creatures makes no difference with regard to him. He is equally in all, or without all. Many have been the disputes among philosophers, whether there be any such thing as empty space in the universe; and it is now generally supposed that all space is full. Perhaps it cannot be proved that all space is filled with matter. But the heathen himself will bear us witness, *Jovis omnia plena:* "All things are full of God." Yea, and whatever space exists beyond the bounds of creation, (for creation must have bounds, seeing nothing is boundless, nothing can be, but the great Creator,) even that space cannot exclude Him who fills the heaven and the earth.

Just equivalent to this is the expression of the apostle, Eph. ii, 23, (not as some have strangely supposed, concerning the church, but concerning the Head of it,) "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all;" τα παντα εν πασιν literally translated, *all things in all things:* the strongest expression of universality which can possibly be conceived. It necessarily includes the least and the greatest of all things that exist. So that if any expression could be stronger, it would be stronger than even that, the "filling heaven and earth."

Indeed this very expression, "Do not I fill heaven and

earth?" (the question being equal to the strongest affirmation,) implies the clearest assertion of God's being present everywhere, and filling all space: for it is well known the Hebrew phrase, "heaven and earth," includes the whole universe; the whole extent of space, created or uncreated, and all that is therein.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 412, 413.

It is true, our narrow understandings but imperfectly comprehend this. But whether we comprehend it or not, we are certain that so it is. As certain as it is that he created all things, and that he still sustains all that is created, so certain it is that he is present at all times, in all places; that he is above, beneath; that he "besets us behind and before," and, as it were, "lays his hand upon us." We allow "such knowledge is too high" and wonderful for us; we "cannot attain unto it." The manner of his presence no man can explain, nor, probably, any angel in heaven. Perhaps what the ancient philosopher speaks of the soul, in regard to its residence in the body, that it is *tota in toto, et tota in qualibet parte*, might, in some sense, be spoken of the omnipresent Spirit in regard to the universe: that he is not only "all in the whole, but all in every part." Be this as it may, it cannot be doubted but he sees every atom of his creation, and that a thousand times more clearly than we see the things that are close to us: even of these we see only the surface, while he sees the inmost essence of every thing.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 101.

SECTION V.

His Omnipotence.

He is omnipotent as well as omnipresent: there can be no more bounds to his power, than to his presence. He "hath a mighty arm: strong is his hand, and high is his

right hand." He doeth whatsoever pleaseth him, in the heavens, the earth, the sea, and in all deep places. With men, we know, many things are impossible, "but not with God: with him all things are possible." Whensoever he willeth, to do is present with him.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 429, 430.

SECTION VI.

His Omniscience.

And as this all-wise, all-gracious being created all things, so he sustains all things. He is the preserver, as well as the creator of every thing that exists. "He upholdeth all things by the word of his power;" that is, by his powerful word. Now it must be that he knows every thing he has made, and every thing that he preserves from moment to moment; otherwise he could not preserve it, he could not continue to it the being which he has given it. And it is nothing strange that He who is omnipresent, who "filleth heaven and earth," who is in every place, should see what is in every place where he is intimately present. If the eye of man discerns things at a small distance, the eye of an eagle what is at a greater, the eye of an angel what is at a thousand times greater distance, (perhaps taking in the surface of the earth at one view;) how shall not the eye of God see every thing through the whole extent of creation? Especially considering that nothing is distant from him, in whom we all "live, and move, and have our being."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 101.

The omnipresent God sees and knows all the properties of the beings that he hath made. He knows all the connections, dependances, and relations, and all the ways wherein one of them can affect another. In particular, he saw all the inanimate parts of the creation, whether in heaven above, or in the earth beneath. He knows how the

stars, comets, or planets above, influence the inhabitants of the earth beneath; what influence the lower heavens, with their magazines of fire, hail, snow, and vapours, winds, and storms, have on our planet, and what effects may be produced in the bowels of the earth by fire, air, or water; what exhalations may be raised therefrom, and what changes wrought thereby; what effects every mineral or vegetable may have upon the children of men: all these lie naked and open to the eye of the Creator and Preserver of the universe.

He knows all the animals of the lower world, whether beasts, birds, fishes, reptiles, or insects. He knows all the qualities and powers he hath given them, from the highest to the lowest. He knows every good angel, and every evil angel, in every part of his dominions; and looks from heaven upon the children of men over the whole face of the earth. He knows all the hearts of the sons of men, and understands all their thoughts: he sees what any angel, any devil, any man, either thinks, or speaks, or does; yea, and all they feel. He sees all their sufferings, with every circumstance of them.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 101, 102.

The omniscience of God is a clear and necessary consequence of his omnipresence. If he is present in every part of the universe, he cannot but know whatever is, or is done there: according to the words of St. James, "known unto God are all his works," and the works of every creature, "from the beginning" of the world; or rather, as the phrase literally implies, "from eternity." His eyes are not only "over all the earth, beholding the evil and the good;" but likewise over the whole creation; yea, and the paths of uncreated night. Is there any difference between his knowledge and his wisdom? If there be, is not his knowledge the more general term, (at least according to our weak conceptions,) and his wisdom a particular branch of it? namely, the knowing the end of every thing

that exists, and the means of applying it to that end?—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 430.

SECTION VII.

His Incomprehensibility.

How astonishingly little do we know of God! How small a part of his nature do we know: of his essential attributes! What conception can we form of his omnipresence? Who is able to comprehend how God is in this and every place? how he fills the immensity of space? If philosophers, by denying the existence of a vacuum, only meant that there is no place empty of God, that every point of infinite space is full of God, certainly no man could call it in question. But still, the fact being admitted, what is omnipresence or ubiquity? Man is no more able to comprehend this than to grasp the universe.

The omnipresence or immensity of God Sir Isaac Newton endeavours to illustrate by a strong expression, by terming infinite space "the sensorium of the Deity." And the very heathens did not scruple to say, "all things are full of God:" just equivalent with his own declaration, "Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" How beautifully does the psalmist illustrate this!—"Whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I go up into heaven, thou art there: if I go down to hell, thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the utmost parts of the sea; even there thy hand shall find me, and thy right hand shall hold me." But, in the mean time, what conception can we form either of his eternity or immensity? Such knowledge is too wonderful for us: we cannot attain unto it.

A second essential attribute of God is eternity. He existed before all time. Perhaps we might more properly say, He *does exist* from everlasting to everlasting. But

what is eternity? A celebrated author says, that the divine eternity is "*vitæ interminabilis tota simul et perfecta possessio:*" the at once entire and perfect possession of never-ending life. But how much wiser are we for this definition? We know just as much of it as we did before. "The at once entire and perfect possession!" Who can conceive what this means?

If indeed God had stamped (as some have maintained) an idea of himself on every human soul, we must certainly have understood something of these, as well as his other attributes; for we cannot suppose he would have impressed upon us either a false or an imperfect idea of himself; but the truth is, no man ever did, or does now, find any such idea stamped upon his soul. The little which we do know of God,) except what we receive by the inspiration of the Holy One,) we do not gather from any inward impression, but gradually acquire from without. "The invisible things of God," if they are known at all, "are known from the things that are made:" not from what God hath written in our hearts, but from what he hath written in all works.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 117, 118.

SECTION VIII.

His Holiness.

Holiness is another of the attributes of the almighty, all-wise God. He is infinitely distant from every touch of evil. He "is light, and in him is no darkness at all." He is a God of unblemished justice and truth: but above all is his mercy. This we may easily learn from that beautiful passage in the thirty-third and thirty-fourth chapters of Exodus: "And Moses said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. And the Lord descended in the cloud, and proclaimed the name of the Lord, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant

in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 430.

SECTION IX.

The Creator of all things.

"In the beginning God created the matter of the heavens and the earth." (So the words, as a great man observes, may properly be translated.) He first created the four elements out of which the whole universe was composed; earth, water, air, and fire, all mingled together in one common mass. The grosser parts of this, the earth and water, were utterly without form till God infused a principle of motion, commanding the air to move "upon the face of the waters." In the next place, "the Lord God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Here were the four constituent parts of the universe; the true, original, simple elements. They were all essentially distinct from each other, and yet so intimately mixed together, in all compound bodies, that we cannot find any, be it ever so minute, which does not contain them all.

"And God saw that" every one of these "was good;" was perfect in its kind. The earth was good. The whole surface of it was beautiful in a high degree. To make it more agreeable,

> "He clothed
> The univeral face with pleasant green."

He adorned it with flowers of every hue, and with shrubs and trees of every kind. And every part was fertile, as well as beautiful; it was no way deformed by rough or ragged rocks; it did not shock the view with horrid precipices, huge chasms, or dreary caverns; with deep impassable morasses, or deserts of barren sand. But we have not any authority to say, with some learned and inge-

nious authors, that there were no mountains on the original earth, no unevenness on its surface. It is not easy to reconcile this hypothesis with those words of Moses "The waters prevailed; and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upward [above the highest] did the water prevail, and the mountains were covered," Gen. vii, 19–23. We have no reason to believe that these mountains were produced by the deluge itself; not the least intimation of this is given: therefore we cannot doubt but they existed before it. Indeed they answered many excellent purposes, beside greatly increasing the beauty of the creation by a variety of prospects, which had been totally lost had the earth been one extended plain. Yet we need not suppose their sides were abrupt, or difficult of ascent. It is highly probable that they rose and fell by almost insensible degrees.

As to the internal parts of the earth, even to this day we have scarce any knowledge of them. Many have supposed the centre of the globe to be surrounded with an abyss of fire. Many others have imagined it to be encompassed with an abyss of water, which they supposed to be termed in Scripture "the great deep," Gen. vii, 11; all the fountains of which were broken up in order to the general deluge. But, however this was, we are sure all things were disposed therein with the most perfect order and harmony. Hence there were no agitations within the bowels of the globe; no violent convulsions; no concussions of the earth; no earthquakes; but all was unmoved as the pillars of heaven. There were then no such things as eruptions of fire; there were no volcanoes, or burning mountains. Neither Vesuvius, Etna, nor Hecla, if they had any being, then poured out smoke and flame, but were covered with a verdant mantle, from the top to the bottom.

The element of water, it is probable, was then mostly confined within the great abyss. In the new earth, (as we

are informed by the apostle, Rev. xxi, 1,) "there will be no more sea;" none covering, as now, the face of the earth, and rendering so large a part of it uninhabitable by man. Hence it is probable there was no external sea in the paradisaical earth; none until the great deep burst the barriers which were originally appointed for it. Indeed there was not then that need of the ocean for navigation which there is now: for either, as the poet supposes,

Omnis tulit omnia tellus;

every country produced whatever was requisite either for the necessity or comfort of its inhabitants; or man, being then (as he will be again at the resurrection) equal to angels, was made able to convey himself, at his pleasure, to any given distance; over and above that, those flaming messengers were always ready to minister to the heirs of salvation. But whether there was sea or not, there were rivers sufficient to water the earth, and make it very plenteous. These answered all the purposes of convenience and pleasure by

"liquid lapse of murmuring stream;"

to which were added gentle, genial showers, with salutary mists and exhalations. But there were no putrid lakes, no turbid or stagnating waters; but only such as

"bore imprest
Fair nature's image on their placid breast."

The element of air was then always serene, and always friendly to man. It contained no frightful meteors, nor unwholesome vapours, no poisonous exhalations. There were no tempests, but only cool and gentle breezes,

genitabilis aura Favoni,

fanning both man and beast, and wafting the fragrant odours on their silent wings.

The sun, the fountain of fire,

> " Of this great world both eye and soul,"

was situated at the most exact distance from the earth, so as to yield a sufficient quantity of heat (neither too little nor too much) to every part of it. God had not yet

> " Bid his angels turn askance
> This oblique globe."

There was therefore then no country that groaned under

> " The rage of Arctos and eternal frost."

There was no violent winter, or sultry summer; no extreme, either of heat or cold. No soil was burned up by the solar heat; none uninhabitable through the want of it. Thus earth, water, air, and fire, all conspired together to the welfare and pleasure of man.

To the same purpose served the grateful vicissitude of light and darkness, day and night. For as the human body, though not liable to death or pain, yet needed continual sustenance by food; so, although it was not liable to weariness, yet it needed continual reparation by sleep. By this the springs of the animal machine were wound up from time to time, and kept always fit for the pleasing labour for which man was designed by his Creator. Accordingly "the evening and the morning were the first day," before sin or pain was in the world. The first natural day had one part dark, for a season of repose; one part light, for a season of labour. And even in paradise "Adam slept" (Gen. ii, 21) before he sinned: sleep therefore belonged to innocent human nature. Yet I do not apprehend it can be inferred from hence that there is either darkness or sleep in heaven. Surely there is no darkness in that city of God. Is it not expressly said, (Rev. xxii, 5,) "There shall be no night there?" Indeed they have no light from the sun; but "the Lord giveth

them light." So it is all day in heaven, as it is all night in hell. On earth we have a mixture of both. Day and night succeed each other, till earth shall be turned to heaven. Neither can we at all credit the account given by the ancient poet concerning sleep in heaven; although he allows "cloud-compelling Jove" to remain awake, while the inferior gods were sleeping. It is pity, therefore, that our great poet should copy so servilely after the old heathen, as to tell us,

"Sleep had seal'd
All but th' unsleeping eyes of God himself."

Not so: they that are "before the throne of God serve him day and night," speaking after the manner of men, "in his temple," Rev. vii, 15, that is, without any interval. As wicked spirits are tormented day and night, without any intermission of their misery; so holy spirits enjoy God day and night without any intermission of their happiness.

On the second day God encompassed the terraqueous globe with that noble appendage the atmosphere; consisting chiefly of air, but replete with earthly particles of various kinds, and with huge volumes of water, sometimes visible, buoyed up by that ethereal fire, a particle of which cleaves to every particle of air. By this the water was divided into innumerable drops, which, descending, watered the earth and made it very plenteous, without incommoding any of its inhabitants. For there were then no impetuous currents of air; no tempestuous winds; no furious hail; no torrents of rain; no rolling thunders, or forky lightnings. One perennial spring was perpetually smiling over the whole surface of the earth.

On the third day God commanded all kinds of vegetables to spring out of the earth; and then, to add thereto innumerable herbs, intermixed with flowers of all hues. To

these were added shrubs of every kind; together with tall and stately trees, whether for shade, for timber, or for fruit, in endless variety. Some of these were adapted to particular climates, or particular exposures; while vegetables of more general use (as wheat in particular) were not confined to one country, but would flourish almost in every climate. But among all these there were no weeds; no useless plants; none that encumbered the ground; much less were there any poisonous ones, tending to hurt any one creature; but every thing was salutary in its kind, suitable to the gracious design of its great Creator.

The Lord now created "the sun to rule the day, and moon to govern the night." The sun was

"Of this great world both eye and soul—"

the *eye*, making all things visible; distributing light to every part of the system; and thereby rejoicing both earth and sky; and the *soul*, the principle of all life, whether to vegetables or animals. Some of the uses of the moon we are acquainted with: her causing the ebbing and flowing of the sea, and influencing, in a greater or smaller degree, all the fluids in the terraqueous globe. And many other uses she may have, unknown to us, but known to the wise Creator. But it is certain she had no hurtful, no unwholesome influence on any living creature. "He made the stars also;" both those that move around the sun, whether of the primary or secondary order; or those that, being at a far greater distance, appear to us fixed in the firmament of heaven. Whether comets are to be numbered among the stars, and whether they were parts of the original creation, is, perhaps, not so easy to determine, at least with certainty; as we have nothing but probable conjecture either concerning their nature or their use. We know not whether, (as some ingenious men have imagined,) they are ruined worlds—worlds that

have undergone a general conflagration; or whether (as others not improbably suppose) they are immense reservoirs of fluids, appointed to revolve at certain seasons, and to supply the still decreasing moisture of the earth. But certain we are that they did not either produce or portend any evil. They did not (as many have fancied since)

> "From their horrid hair
> Shake pestilence and war."

The Lord God afterward peopled the earth with animals of every kind. He first commanded the waters to bring forth abundantly; to bring forth creatures which, as they inhabited a grosser element, so they were in general of a more stupid nature; endowed with fewer senses and less understanding than other animals. The bivalved shellfish, in particular, seem to have no sense but that of feeling, unless, perhaps, a low measure of taste; so that they are but one degree above vegetables. And even the king of the waters, (a title which some give the whale, because of his enormous magnitude,) though he has sight added to taste and feeling, does not appear to have an understanding proportioned to his bulk. Rather he is inferior therein, not only to most birds and beasts, but to the generality of even reptiles and insects. However, none of these then attempted to devour, or in any wise hurt one another. All were peaceful and quiet, as were the watery fields wherein they ranged at pleasure.

It seems the insect kinds were at least one degree above the inhabitants of the waters. Almost all these too devour one another, and every other creature which they can conquer. Indeed such is the miserably disordered state of the world at present, that innumerable creatures can no otherwise preserve their own lives than by destroying others. But in the beginning it was not so. The pa-

radisaical earth afforded a sufficiency of food for all its inhabitants; so that none of them had any need or temptation to prey upon the other. The spider was then as harmless as the fly, and did not then lie in wait for blood. The weakest of them crept securely over the earth, or spread their gilded wings in the air, and wavered in the breeze, or glittered in the sun, without any to make them afraid. Meantime the reptiles of every kind were equally harmless, and more intelligent than they; yea, one species of them "was more subtle," or knowing, "than any of the" brute creation "which God had made."

But, in general, the birds, created to fly in the open firmament of heaven, appear to have been of an order far superior to either insects or reptiles; although still considerably inferior to beasts: as we now restrain that word to quadrupeds, four-footed animals, which, two hundred years ago, included every kind of living creatures. Many species of these are not only endowed with a large measure of natural understanding, but are likewise capable of much improvement by art, such as one would not readily conceive. But among all these there were no birds or beasts of prey; none that destroyed or molested another; but all the creatures breathed, in their several kinds, the benevolence of their great Creator.

Such was the state of the creation, according to the scanty ideas which we can now form concerning it, when its great Author, surveying the whole system at one view, pronounced it "very good." It was good in the highest degree whereof it was capable, and without any mixture of evil. Every part was exactly suited to the others, and conducive to the good of the whole. There was a "golden chain," to use the expression of Plato, "let down from the throne of God;" an exactly connected series of beings, from the highest to the lowest; from dead earth, through fossils, vegetables, animals, to man created in the image

of God, and designed to know, to love, and to enjoy his Creator to all eternity.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 25–29.

SECTION X.

All things created for Himself.

God created all things for himself: more especially all intelligent spirits. (And indeed it seems that intelligence, in some kind or degree, is inseparable from spiritual beings; that intelligence is as essential to spirits as extension is to matter.) He made those more directly for himself, to know, love, and enjoy him. As the sun is the centre of the solar system, so (as far as we may compare material things with spiritual) we need not scruple to affirm that God is the centre of spirits. And as long as they are united to Him, created spirits are at rest: they are at rest so long, and no longer, as they "attend upon the Lord without distraction."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 191, 192.

SECTION XI.

The Source of Holiness to others.

"It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The meaning of these words may be made more plain by a small transposition of them. "It is God that of his good pleasure worketh in you both to will and to do." This position of the words connecting the phrase, *of his good pleasure*, with the word *worketh*, removes all imagination of merit from man, and gives God the whole glory of his work. Otherwise we might have had some room for boasting, as if it were our own desert, some goodness in us, or some good thing done by us, which first moved God to work. But this expression cuts off all such vain conceits, and clearly shows his motive to work lay wholly in himself; in his own mere grace; in his unmerited mercy.

It is by this alone he is impelled to work in man both to will and to do. The expression is capable of two interpretations, both of which are unquestionably true. First, *to will*, may include the whole of inward; *to do*, the whole of outward religion. And if it be thus understood, it implies, that it is God that worketh both inward and outward holiness. Secondly, *to will*, may imply every good desire; *to do*, whatever results therefrom. And then the sentence means, God breathes into us every good desire, and brings every good desire to good effect.

The original words το θελειν and το ενεργειν, seem to favour the latter construction: το θελειν, which we render *to will*, plainly including every good desire, whether relating to our tempers, words, or actions; to inward or outward holiness. And το ενεργειν, which we render *to do*, manifestly implies all that power from on high, all that energy which works in us every right disposition, and then furnishes us for every good word and work.

Nothing can so directly tend to hide pride from man, as a deep, lasting conviction of this. For if we are thoroughly sensible that we have nothing which we have not received, how can we glory as if we had not received it? If we know and feel that the very first motion of good is from above, as well as the power which conducts it to the end; if it is God that not only infuses every good desire, but that accompanies and follows it, else it vanishes away; then it evidently follows, that "he who glorieth must glory in the Lord."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 235.

SECTION XII.

His love to Man.

All the blessings which God hath bestowed upon man are of his mere grace, bounty, or favour; his free, undeserved favour; favour altogether undeserved: man having

no claim to the least of his mercies. It was free grace that "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him a living soul," and stamped on that soul the image of God, and "put all things under his feet." The same free grace continues to us, at this day, life, and breath, and all things. For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deserve the least thing at God's hand. "All our works, thou, O God, hast wrought in us!" These therefore are so many more instances of his free mercy: and, whatever righteousness may be found in man, this is also the gift of God.—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 13.

SECTION XIII.

Freeness of his Love.

How freely does God love the world! While we were yet sinners, "Christ died for the ungodly." While we were "dead in sin," God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." And how freely with him does he "give us all things!" Verily FREE GRACE is all in all.

The grace or love of God, whence cometh our salvation, is FREE IN ALL, and FREE FOR ALL.

First, it is free IN ALL to whom it is given. It does not depend on any power or merit in man: no, not in any degree, neither in whole nor in part. It does not in any wise depend either on the good works or righteousness of the receiver: not on any thing he has done, or any thing he is. It does not depend on his endeavours. It does not depend on his good tempers, or good desires, or good purposes and intentions; for all these flow from the free grace of God; they are the streams only, not the fountain. They are the fruits of free grace, and not the root. They are not the cause, but the effects of it. Whatsoever good is in man, or is done by man, God is the au-

thor and doer of it. Thus is his grace free in all; that is, no way depending on any power or merit in man, but on God alone, who freely gave us his own Son, and "with him freely giveth us all things."

But is it free FOR ALL, as well as IN ALL? [It is.] The decree is passed: and so it was before the foundation of the world. But what decree? Even this: "I will set before the sons of men 'life and death, blessing and cursing. And the soul that chooseth life shall live, as the soul that chooseth death shall die." This decree, whereby "whom God did foreknow he did predestinate," was indeed from everlasting: this, whereby all who suffer Christ to make them alive are "elect, according to the foreknowledge of God," now standeth fast, even as the moon, and as the faithful witnesses in heaven; and when heaven and earth shall pass away, yet this shall not pass away, for it is as unchangeable and eternal as is the being of God that gave it. This decree yields the strongest encouragement to abound in all good works and in all holiness; and it is a well-spring of joy, of happiness also, to our great and endless comfort. This is worthy of God: it is every way consistent with all the perfections of his nature. It gives us the noblest view both of his justice, mercy, and truth. To this agrees the whole scope of the Christian revelation, as well as all the parts thereof. To this Moses and all the prophets bear witness, and our blessed Lord and all his apostles. Thus Moses, in the name of his Lord, "I call heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed may live." Thus Ezekiel, (to cite one prophet for all,) "The soul that sinneth it shall die: the son shall not bear [eternally] the iniquity of the father. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him," xviii, 20. Thus our blessed

Lord: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink," John vii, 37. Thus his great apostle, St. Paul, Acts xvii, 13, "God commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent;"—"all men, every where;" every man in every place, without any exception either of place or person. Thus St. James, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him," James i, 5. Thus St. Peter, 2 Pet. iii, 9, "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." And thus St. John, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father; and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii, 1, 2.

O hear ye this, ye that forget God! Ye cannot charge your death upon him. "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God?" Ezek. xviii, 23, &c. Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed—for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God. Wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. xxxiii, 11. *Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 482, 490.

SECTION XIV.

His Providence universal.

The true God is the governor of all things: "His kingdom ruleth over all." The government rests upon his shoulder throughout all ages. He is the Lord and Disposer of the whole creation, and every part of it. And in

how astonishing a manner does he govern the world! How far are his ways above human thought! How little do we know of his methods of government! Only this we know, "*Ita præsides singulis sicut universis, et universis sicut singulis!*" Thou presidest over each creature as if it were the universe, and over the universe as over each individual creature. Dwell a little upon this sentiment: what a glorious mystery does it contain! It is paraphrased in the words recited below:

> "Father, how wide thy glories shine!
> Lord of the universe,—and mine:
> Thy goodness watches o'er the whole,
> As all the world were but one soul:
> Yet keeps my every sacred hair,
> As I remain'd thy single care!"

As yet there is a difference, as was said before, in his providential government over the children of men. A pious writer observes, There is a threefold circle of divine providence. The *outermost circle* includes all the sons of men; heathens, Mohammedans, Jews, and Christians. He causeth his sun to rise upon all. He giveth them rain and fruitful seasons. He pours ten thousand benefits upon them, and fills their hearts with food and gladness. With an *interior circle* he encompasses the whole visible Christian church; all that name the name of Christ. He has an additional regard to these, and a nearer attention to their welfare. But the *innermost circle* of his providence encloses only the invisible church of Christ; all real Christians, wherever dispersed in all corners of the earth; all that worship God (whatever denomination they are of) in spirit and in truth. He keeps them as the apple of an eye: he hides them under the shadow of his wings. And it is to these in particular that our Lord says, "Even the hairs of your head are all numbered."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 179, 180.

It is one of the first principles of religion that His kingdom ruleth over all: so that we may say with confidence, "O Lord our Governor, how excellent is thy name over all the earth!" It is a childish conceit to suppose that chance governs the world, or has any part in the government of it: no, not even in those things that, to a vulgar eye, appear to be perfectly casual. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the disposal thereof is from the Lord." Our blessed Master himself has put this matter beyond all possible doubt: Not a sparrow, saith he, falleth to the ground without the will of your Father which is in heaven: yea, (to express the thing more strongly still,) "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 121.

SECTION XV.

His Providence mysterious.

Incomprehensible to us are many of the divine dispensations with regard to particular families. We cannot at all comprehend why He raises some to wealth, honour, and power; and why, in the mean time, he depresses others with poverty and various afflictions. Some wonderfully prosper in all they take in hand, and the world pours in upon them; while others, with all their labour and toil, can scarcely procure daily bread. And perhaps prosperity and applause continue with the former to their death; while the latter drink the cup of adversity to their life's end: although no reason appears to us either for the prosperity of the one, or the adversity of the other.

As little can we account for the divine dispensations, with regard to individuals. We know not why the lot of this man is cast in Europe, the lot of that man in the wilds of America; why one is born of rich or noble, the other of poor parents; why the father and mother of one are

strong and healthy; those of another weak and diseased, in consequence of which he drags a miserable being all the days of his life, exposed to want, and pain, and a thousand temptations, from which he finds no way to escape. How many are, from their very infancy, hedged in with such relations that they seem to have no chance, (as some speak,) no possibility, of being useful to themselves or others! Why are they, antecedent to their own choice, entangled in such connections? Why are hurtful people so cast in their way that they know not how to escape them? And why are useful persons hid out of their sight, or snatched away from them at their utmost need? O God, how unsearchable are thy counsels! Too deep to be fathomed by our reason, and thy ways of executing those counsels not to be traced by our wisdom.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 123.

SECTION XVI.

His Sovereignty.

God reveals himself under a twofold character; as a creator, and as a governor. These are no way inconsistent with each other: but they are totally different.

As a creator he has acted, in all things, according to his own sovereign will. Justice has not, cannot have, any place here; for nothing is due to what has no being. Here therefore he may, in the most absolute sense, "do what he will with his own." Accordingly he created the heavens and the earth, and all things that are therein, in every conceivable respect, "according to his own good pleasure." 1. He began his creation at what time, or rather, at what part of eternity it seemed him good. Had it pleased him, it might have been millions of years sooner, or millions of ages later. 2. He determined, by his sovereign will, the duration of the universe; whether it

should last seven thousand, or seven hundred thousand, or numberless millions of years. 3. By the same he appointed the place of the universe, in the immensity of space. 4. Of his sovereign will he determined the number of the stars, of all the component parts of the universe, and the magnitude of every atom, of every fixed star, every planet, and every comet. 5. As Sovereign, he created the earth, with all the furniture of it, whether animate or inanimate; and gave to each such a nature, with such properties. 6. Of his own good pleasure he made such a creature as man, and, in consequence of his spiritual nature, endued him with understanding, will, and liberty. 7. He hath determined the times for every nation to come into being, with the bounds of their habitation. 8. He has allotted the time, the place, the circumstances, for the birth of each individual.

> "If of parents I came
> That honour'd thy name,
> 'Twas thy wisdom appointed it so."

9. He has given to each a body as it pleased him, weak or strong, healthy or sickly. This implies, 10. That he gives them various degrees of understanding and of knowledge, diversified by numberless circumstances. It is hard to say how far this extends: what an amazing difference there is, to the means of improvement, between one born and brought up in a pious family, and one born and bred among the Hottentots. Only we are sure the difference cannot be so great as to necessitate one to be good, or the other to be evil; to force one into everlasting glory, or the other into everlasting burnings. This cannot be, because it would suppose the character of God, as a creator, to interfere with God as a governor: wherein he does not, cannot possibly, act according to his own mere sovereign will; but, as he has expressly told us, according to the invariable rules both of justice and mercy.

Whether therefore we can account for it or not, (which indeed we cannot in a thousand cases,) we must absolutely maintain that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. But he cannot reward the sun for shining, because the sun is not a free agent. Neither could he reward us for letting our light shine before men, if we acted as necessarily as the sun. All reward, as well as all punishment, presupposes free agency; and whatever creature is incapable of choice is incapable of either the one or the other.

When, therefore, God acts as a governor, as a rewarder or punisher, he no longer acts as a mere sovereign, by his own sole will and pleasure; but as an impartial judge, guided in all things by invariable justice.

Yet it is true that, in some cases, mercy rejoices over justice; although severity never does. God may reward more, but he will never punish more, than strict justice requires. It may be allowed, that God acts as a sovereign in convincing some souls of sin; arresting them in their mad career by his resistless power. It seems also that at the moment of our conversion he acts irresistibly. There may likewise be many irresistible touches during the course of our Christian warfare, with regard to which every believer may say,

> "In the time of my distress
> Thou hast my succour been,
> In my utter helplessness
> Restraining me from sin."

But still, as St. Paul might have been either obedient or "disobedient to the heavenly vision," so every individual may, after all that God has done, either improve his grace, or make it of none effect.

Whatever, therefore, it hath pleased God to do, of his sovereign pleasure, as Creator of heaven and earth; and

whatever his mercy may do on particular occasions, over and above what justice requires; the general rule stands firm as the pillars of heaven, "The Judge of all the earth *will* do right." He will "judge the world in righteousness," and every man therein according to the strictest justice. He will punish no man for doing any thing which he could not possibly avoid; neither for omitting any thing which he could not possibly do. Every punishment supposes the offender might have avoided the offence for which he is punished. Otherwise, to punish him would be palpably unjust, and inconsistent with the character of God our Governor.

Let then these two ideas of God the Creator, the sovereign Creator, and God the Governor, the just Governor, be always kept apart. Let us distinguish them from each other with the utmost care. So shall we give God the full glory of his sovereign grace, without impeaching his inviolable justice.—*Works*, vol. vi, pp. 135, 136.

SECTION XVII.

Divine Election.

I BELIEVE it commonly means one of these two things, first, a divine appointment of some particular men to do some particular work in the world. And this election I believe to be not only personal, but absolute and unconditional. Thus Cyrus was *elected* to rebuild the temple, and St. Paul, with the twelve, to preach the gospel. But I do not find this to have any necessary connection with eternal happiness. Nay, it is plain it has not; for one who is *elected* in this sense may yet be lost eternally. "Have I not chosen (*elected*) you twelve," saith our Lord, "yet one of you hath a devil?" Judas, you see, was *elected* as well as the rest; yet is his lot with the devil and his angels.

I believe *election* means, secondly, a divine appointment of some men to eternal happiness. But I believe this election to be conditional, as well as the reprobation opposite thereto. I believe the eternal decree concerning both is expressed in these words: "He that believeth shall be saved: he that believeth not shall be damned." And this decree, without doubt, God will not change, and man cannot resist. According to this, all true *believers* are in Scripture termed *elect:* as all who continue *in unbelief* are so long properly *reprobates*, that is, *unapproved* of God, and *without discernment* touching the things of the Spirit.

Now God, to whom all things are present at once, who sees all eternity at one view, "calleth the things that are not as though they were," the things that are not as yet as though they were now subsisting. Thus he calls Abraham "the father of many nations" before even Isaac was born. And thus Christ is called "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," though he was not slain, in fact, till some thousands of years after. In like manner God calleth true believers "elect from the foundation of the world," although they were not actually elect or believers till many ages after, in their several generations. Then only it was that they were actually elected when they were made "the sons of God by faith." Then were they in fact chosen and taken out of the world; "elect," saith St. Paul, "through belief of the truth:" or, as St. Peter expresses it, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit."

This election I as firmly believe as I believe the Scripture to be of God. But unconditional election I cannot believe; not only because I cannot find it in Scripture, but also, (to waive all other considerations,) because it necessarily implies unconditional reprobation. Find out any election which does not imply reprobation, and I will gladly agree to it. But reprobation I can never agree to,

while I believe the Scriptures to be of God: as being utterly irreconcilable to the whole scope of the Old and New Testaments.—*Works*, vol. vi, pp. 28, 29.

CHAPTER IV.

OF JESUS CHRIST.

SECTION I.

He is the true God.

He is "God over all, blessed for ever." "He was with God;" with God the Father, "from the beginning;" from eternity; "and was God." "He and the Father are one;" and, consequently, "he thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Accordingly the inspired writers give him all the titles of the most high God. They call him over and over, by the incommunicable name Jehovah; never given to any creature. They ascribe to him all the attributes and all the works of God. So that we need not scruple to pronounce him "God of God, Light of light, very God of very God: in glory equal with the Father; in majesty coeternal."

He is the true God, the only Cause, the sole Creator of all things. "By him," saith the Apostle Paul, "were created all things that are in heaven, and that are on earth;" yea, earth and heaven themselves; but the inhabitants are named because more noble than the house;—"visible and invisible." The several species of which are subjoined: "whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers." So St. John: "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." And accordingly St. Paul applies to him those strong words of the psalmist, "Thou, Lord,

in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands."

And as the true God he is also the Supporter of all the things that he hath made. He beareth, upholdeth, sustaineth all created things by the word of his power: by the same powerful word which brought them out of nothing. As this was absolutely necessary for the beginning of their existence, it is equally so for the continuance of it: were his almighty influence withdrawn they could not subsist a moment longer. Hold up a stone in the air, the moment you withdraw your hand it naturally falls to the ground. In like manner, were He to withdraw his hand for a moment, the creation would fall into nothing.

As the true God he is likewise the Preserver of all things. He not only keeps them in being, but preserves them in that degree of well being which is suitable to their several natures. He preserves them in their several relations, connections, and dependances, so as to compose one system of beings, to form one entire universe, according to the counsel of his will. How strongly and beautifully is this expressed: Τα παντα εν αυτῳ συνεςηκε. "By whom all things consist:" or, more literally, "By and in him are all things compacted into one system." He is not only the support, but also the cement of the whole universe.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 178.

SECTION II.

Union of Natures in his Person.

He was one to whom "God gave not the Spirit by measure; but in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily: and of his fulness we have all received, and grace for grace." Indeed, all the communications of the Godhead which any creatures could receive, were always from him as the Word of God: but all that mankind now

in an earthly state were to receive, must be from him by means of that body, at first mortal like unto theirs, and then glorious "in the likeness of God," which he took upon him for their sake.

In the beginning, the heavenly Word—being a Spirit that issued from the Father, and the Word of his power—made man an image of immortality, according to the likeness of the Father: but he who had been made in the image of God afterward became mortal, when the more powerful Spirit was separated from him. To remedy this the Word became man, that man, by receiving the adoption, might become a son of God once more; that the light of the Father might rest upon the flesh of our Lord, and come bright from thence unto us: and so man, being encompassed with the light of the Godhead, might be carried into immortality. When he was incarnate and became man, he recapitulated in himself all generations of mankind, making himself the centre of our salvation, that what we lost in Adam, even the image and likeness of God, we might receive in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Ghost coming upon Mary, and the power of the Highest overshadowing her, the incarnation of Christ was wrought, and a new birth, whereby man should be born of God, was shown; that as by our first birth we did inherit death, so by this birth we might inherit life.

This is no other than what St. Paul teaches us: "The first man, Adam, was made a living soul, but the second Adam was made a quickening spirit." All that the first man possessed of himself, all that he has transmitted to us, is "a living soul;" a nature endued with an animal life, and receptive of a spiritual. But the second Adam is and was made to us "a quickening spirit:" by a strength from him as our Creator we were at first raised above ourselves; by a strength from him as our Redeemer we shall again live unto God.

In him is laid up for us that supplement to our nature which we shall find the need of sooner or later; and that it cannot be countervailed by any assistance from the creatures, or any improvement of our own faculties: for we were made to be happy only in God; and all our labours and hopes, while we do not thirst after our deified state,—to partake as truly of God as we do of flesh and blood, to be glorified in his nature, as we have been dishonoured in our own,—are the labours and hopes of those who utterly mistake themselves.

The divine wisdom knew what was our proper consolation, though we did not. What does more obviously present itself in the Saviour of the world than a union of man with God? A union attended with all the propriety of behaviour that *we* are called to as candidates of the Spirit; such as walking with God in singleness of heart, perfect self-renunciation, and a life of sufferings. A union which submitted to the necessary stages of our progress; where the divine life was hid for the most part in the secret of the soul till death; in the state of separation comforted the soul, but did not raise it above the intermediate region of Paradise; at the resurrection clothed the body with heavenly qualities and the powers of immortality; and at last raised it to the immediate presence and right hand of the Father.

Christ is not only God above us, which may keep us in awe, but cannot save; but he is Immanuel, God with us, and in us. As he is the Son of God, God must be where he is; and as he is the Son of man, he will be with mankind: the consequence of this is, that in the future age "the tabernacle of God will be with men," and he will show them his glory; and at present he will *dwell* in their hearts by faith in his Son.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 533, 534.

SECTION III.

His Righteousness.

His divine righteousness belongs to his divine nature, as he is ὁ ὤν, He that existeth "over all, God blessed for ever;" the Supreme, the Eternal; "equal with the Father, as touching his Godhead, though inferior to the Father as touching his manhood." Now this his eternal, essential, immutable holiness; his infinite justice, mercy, and truth; in all which He and the Father are one.

But I do not apprehend that the divine righteousness of Christ is immediately concerned in the present question. I believe few, if any, do now contend for the imputation of this righteousness to us. Whoever believes the doctrine of imputation, understands it chiefly, if not solely, of his human righteousness.

The human righteousness of Christ belongs to him in his human nature; as he is the "Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." This is either internal or external. His internal righteousness is the image of God stamped on every power and faculty of his soul. It is a copy of his divine righteousness, so far as it can be imparted to a human spirit. It is a transcript of the divine purity, the divine justice, mercy, and truth. It includes love, reverence, resignation to his Father; humility, meekness, gentleness; love to lost mankind, and every other holy and heavenly temper; and all these in the highest degree, without any defect, or mixture of unholiness.

It was the least part of his external righteousness that he did nothing amiss; that he knew not outward sin of any kind, neither was "guile found in his mouth;" that he never spoke one improper word, nor did one improper action. Thus far it is only a negative righteousness

though such a one as never did, nor ever can, belong to any one that is born of a woman, save himself alone. But even his outward righteousness was positive too: he did all things well: in every word of his tongue, in every work of his hands, he did precisely the "will of Him that sent him." In the whole course of his life he did the will of God on earth as the angels do it in heaven. All he acted and spoke was exactly right in every circumstance. The whole and every part of his obedience was complete. "He fulfilled all righteousness."

But his obedience implied more than all this: it implied not only doing, but suffering; suffering the whole will of God, from the time he came into the world, till "he bore our sins in his own body upon the tree;" yea, till having made a full atonement for them, "he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." This is usually termed the *passive* righteousness of Christ; the former, his *active* righteousness. But as the active and passive righteousness of Christ were never in fact separated from each other, so we never need separate them at all, either in speaking or even in thinking. And it is with regard to both these conjointly that Jesus is called "The Lord our righteousness." *Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 170, 171.

SECTION IV.

His imputed Righteousness.

Look through all the world, and all the men therein are either believers or unbelievers. The first thing, then, which admits of no dispute among reasonable men, is this: To all believers the righteousness of Christ is imputed; to unbelievers it is not.

But when is it imputed? When they believe: in that very hour the righteousness of Christ is theirs. It is imputed to every one that believes, as soon as he believes:

faith and the righteousness of Christ are inseparable. For if he believes according to Scripture, he believes in the righteousness of Christ. There is no true faith, that is, justifying faith, which hath not the righteousness of Christ for its object.

But in what sense is this righteousness imputed to believers? In this: all believers are forgiven and accepted, not for the sake of any thing in them, or of any thing that ever was, that is, or ever can be done by them, but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for them. I say again, not for the sake of any thing in them, or done by them, of their own righteousness or works: "Not for works of righteousness which we have done, but of his own mercy he saved us." "By grace ye are saved, through faith,—not of works, lest any man should boast;" but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for us. We are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." And this is not only the means of our obtaining the favour of God, but of our continuing therein. It is thus we come to God at first; it is by the same we come unto him ever after. We walk in one and the same new and living way till our spirit returns to God.

But perhaps some will object, "Nay, but you affirm that faith is imputed to us for righteousness." St. Paul affirms this over and over; therefore I affirm it too. Faith is imputed for righteousness to every believer; namely, faith in the righteousness of Christ; but this is exactly the same thing which has been said before; for by that expression I mean neither more nor less than that we are justified by faith, not by works; or that every believer is forgiven and accepted merely for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered.

But is not a believer invested or clothed with the righteousness of Christ? Undoubtedly he is. And accord-

ingly the words above recited are the language of every believing heart:

> "Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
> My beauty are, my glorious dress."

That is, for the sake of thy active and passive righteousness I am forgiven and accepted of God.

But must not we put off the filthy rags of our own righteousness before we can put on the spotless righteousness of Christ? Certainly we must; that is, in plain terms, we must repent before we can believe the gospel. We must be cut off from dependance upon ourselves before we can truly depend upon Christ. We must cast away all confidence in our own righteousness, or we cannot have a true confidence in His. Till we are delivered from trusting in any thing that we do, we cannot thoroughly trust in what he has done and suffered. First, we receive the sentence of death in ourselves; then we trust in Him that lived and died for us.

But do not you believe in inherent righteousness? Yes, in its proper place; not as the ground of our acceptance with God, but as the fruit of it; not in the place of imputed righteousness, but as consequent upon it. That is, I believe God implants righteousness in every one to whom he has imputed it. I believe "Jesus Christ is made of God unto us sanctification," as well as "righteousness;" or, that God sanctifies, as well as justifies, all them that believe in him. They to whom the righteousness of Christ is imputed, are made righteous by the Spirit of Christ; are renewed in the image of God, "after the likeness wherein they were created, in righteousness and true holiness."

But do not you put faith in the room of Christ, or of his righteousness? By no means: I take particular care to put each of these in its proper place. The righteousness

of Christ is the whole and sole foundation of all our hope. It is by faith that the Holy Ghost enables us to build upon this foundation. God gives this faith: in that moment we are accepted of God; and yet, not for the sake of that faith, but of what Christ has done and suffered for us. You see each of these has its proper place, and neither clashes with the other; we believe, we love, we endeavour to walk in all the commandments of the Lord blameless; yet,

"While thus we bestow
Our moments below,
Ourselves we forsake,
And refuge in Jesus's righteousness take.
His passion alone,
The foundation we own;
And pardon we claim,
And eternal redemption, in Jesus's name."

I therefore no more deny the righteousness of Christ than I deny the Godhead of Christ; and a man may full as justly charge me with denying the one as the other. Neither do I deny imputed righteousness: this is another unkind and unjust accusation. I always did, and do still continually affirm, that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to every believer.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 171–174.

SECTION V.

The Saviour of Men.

In this state we were, even all mankind, when "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end we might not perish, but have everlasting life." In the fulness of time he was made man, another common head of mankind, a second general parent and representative of the whole human race. And as such it was that "he bore our griefs," "the Lord laying upon him the ini-

quities of us all." Then was he "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." "He made his soul an offering for sin;" he poured out his blood for the transgressors; he "bare our sins in his own body on the tree," that by his stripes we might be healed: and by that one oblation of himself, once offered, he hath redeemed me and all mankind; having thereby "made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

In consideration of this, that the Son of God hath "tasted death for every man," God hath now "reconciled the world to himself, not imputing to them their former trespasses." And thus, "as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification." So that for the sake of his well beloved Son, of what he hath done and suffered for us, God now vouchsafes, on one only condition, (which himself also enables us to perform,) both to remit the punishment due to our sins, to reinstate us in his favour, and to restore our dead souls to spiritual life, as the earnest of life eternal.

This is the general ground of the whole doctrine of justification. By the sin of the first Adam, who was not only the father, but likewise the representative of us all, we all fell short of the favour of God; we all became children of wrath; or, as the apostle expresses it, "judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Even so, by the sacrifice for sin made by the second Adam, as the representative of us all, God is so far reconciled to all the world that he hath given them a new covenant; the plain condition whereof being once fulfilled, "there is no more condemnation" for us, but "we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." *Sermons*, vol. i, p. 46.

SECTION VI.

The Author of eternal Life.

"HE is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." He is the purchaser of that "crown of life," which will be given to all that are "faithful unto death." And he will be the soul of all their joys to all the saints in glory.

"The flame of angelical love
Is kindled at Jesus's face;
And all the enjoyment above
Consists in the rapturous gaze."

The thing directly intended is not that he is the resurrection: although this also is true, according to his own declaration, "I am the resurrection and the life:" agreeably to which are St. Paul's words, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." So that we may well say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who—hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

But waiving what he *will be* hereafter, we are here called to consider what he *is now*. He is now the life of every thing that lives, in any kind or degree. He is the source of the lowest species of life; that of *vegetables;* as being the source of all the motion on which vegetation depends. He is the fountain of the life of *animals;* the power by which the heart beats, and the circulating juices flow. He is the fountain of all the life which man possesses, in common with other animals. And if we distinguish the *rational* from the animal life, he is the source of this also.

But how infinitely short does all this fall of the life which is here directly intended, and of which the apostle

speaks so explicitly in the preceding verses, (ver. 11, 12:) "This is the testimony, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; [the eternal life here spoken of;] and he that hath not the Son [of God] hath not [this] life." As if he had said, This is the sum of the testimony which God hath testified of his Son, that God hath given us, not only a title to, but the real beginning of eternal life: and this life is purchased by, and treasured up in his Son: who has all the springs and the fulness of it in himself, to communicate to his body, the church.

This eternal life then commences when it pleases the Father to reveal his Son in our hearts; when we first know Christ, being enabled to "call him Lord by the Holy Ghost;" when we can testify, our conscience bearing us witness in the Holy Ghost, "The life which I now live I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." And then it is that happiness begins; happiness real, solid, substantial. Then it is that heaven is opened in the soul, that the proper heavenly state commences, while the love of God, as loving us, is shed abroad in the heart, instantly producing love to all mankind; general pure benevolence, together with its genuine fruits, lowliness, meekness, patience, contentedness in every state; an entire, clear, full acquiescence in the whole will of God; enabling us to "rejoice evermore, and in every thing to give thanks."

As our knowledge and our love of him increase, by the same degrees, and in the same proportion, the kingdom of an inward heaven must necessarily increase also; while we "grow up in all things into Him who is our head." And when we are *εν αυτῳ πεπληρωμενοι*, *complete in him*, as our translators render it; but more properly, when we are *filled with him;* when "Christ is in us, the hope of glory," is our God and our all; when he has taken the full pos-

session of our heart; when he reigns therein without a rival, the Lord of every motion there; when we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, we are one with Christ, and Christ with us; then we are completely happy; and then we live "all the life that is hid with Christ in God." Then, and not till then, we properly experience what that word meaneth: "God is love: and whosoever dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 180, 181.

SECTION VII.

Will judge the World.

THE person by whom God will judge the world is his only begotten Son, whose "goings forth are from everlasting;" "who is God over all, blessed for ever." Unto Him, being "the outbeaming of his Father's glory, the express image of his person," Heb. i, 3, the Father "hath committed all judgment, because he is the Son of Man," John v, 22, 27; because, though he was "in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he emptied himself, taking upon him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men," Phil. ii, 6, 7: yea, because "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, [yet further,] becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him," even in his human nature, and "ordained him," as man, to try the children of men, "to be the judge both of the quick and dead;" both of those who shall be found alive at his coming, and of those who were before gathered to their fathers.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 127, 128.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE HOLY GHOST.

SECTION I.

As the Spirit of Adoption.

WHAT is that testimony of God's Spirit which is superadded to, and conjoined with this [testimony of our own spirit?] How does he "bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God?" It is hard to find words in the language of men to explain "the deep things of God." Indeed there are none that will adequately express what the children of God experience. But perhaps one might say, (desiring any who are taught of God to correct, to soften, or strengthen the expression,) The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.

That this testimony of the Spirit of God must needs, in the very nature of things, be antecedent to the testimony of our own spirit, may appear from this single consideration: We must be holy of heart, and holy in life, before we can be conscious that we are so; before we can have the testimony of our spirit that we are inwardly and outwardly holy. But we must love God before we can be holy at all; this being the root of all holiness. Now we cannot love God, till we know he loves us. "We love him because he first loved us." And we cannot know his pardoning love to us till his Spirit witness it to our spirit. Since, therefore, this testimony of his Spirit must precede the love of God and all holiness, of consequence it must

precede our inward consciousness thereof, or the testimony of our spirit concerning them.

Then, and not till then—when the Spirit of God beareth that witness to our spirit, "God hath loved thee, and given his own Son to be the propitiation for thy sins; the Son of God hath loved thee, and hath washed thee from thy sins in his own blood;"—"we love God, because he first loved us;" and, for his sake, we love our brother also. And of this we cannot but be conscious to ourselves: we "know the things that are freely given to us of God." We know that we love God and keep his commandments: and "hereby also we know that we are of God." This is that testimony of our own spirit which, so long as we continue to love God and keep his commandments, continues joined with the testimony of God's spirit "that we are the children of God."

Not that I would by any means be understood, by any thing which has been spoken concerning it, to exclude the operation of the Spirit of God even from the testimony of our own spirit. In no wise. It is he that not only worketh in us every manner of thing that is good, but also shines upon his own work, and clearly shows what he has wrought. Accordingly this is spoken of by St. Paul as one great end of our receiving the Spirit, "that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God:" that he may strengthen the testimony of our conscience touching our simplicity and godly sincerity;" and give us to discern, in a fuller and stronger light, that we now do the things which please him.

Should it still be inquired, How does the Spirit of God "bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," so as to exclude all doubt, and evince the reality of our sonship,—the answer is clear from what has been observed above. And first, as to the witness of our spirit: The soul as intimately and evidently perceives when it

loves, delights, and rejoices in God, as when it loves and delights in any thing on earth. And it can no more doubt whether it loves, delights, and rejoices or no, than whether it exists or no. If, therefore, this be just reasoning,

He that now loves God, and delights and rejoices in him with an humble joy, and holy delight, and an obedient love, is a child of God:

But I thus love, delight, and rejoice in God:

Therefore I am a child of God:—

Then a Christian can in no wise doubt of his being a child of God. Of the former proposition he has as full an assurance as he has that the Scriptures are of God; and of his thus loving God he has an inward proof which is nothing short of self-evidence. Thus the testimony of our own spirit is with the most intimate conviction manifested to our hearts, in such a manner as beyond all reasonable doubt to evince the reality of our sonship.

The manner how the *divine* testimony is manifested to the heart I do not take upon me to explain. Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me: I cannot attain unto it. The wind bloweth, and I hear the sound thereof; but I cannot tell how it cometh, or whither it goeth. As no one knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man that is in him: so the *manner* of the things of God knoweth no one save the Spirit of God. But the fact we know; namely, that the Spirit of God does give a believer such a testimony of his adoption, that while it is present to the soul, he can no more doubt the reality of his sonship, than he can doubt of the shining of the sun while he stands in the full blaze of his beams. *Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 87, 89.

The sum of all this is: The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the souls of believers whereby the Spirit of God directly testifies to their spirit that they are children of God. And it is not questioned whether

there is a testimony of the Spirit, but whether there is any *direct* testimony. Whether there is any other than that which arises from a consciousness of the fruit of the Spirit. We believe there is: because this is the plain natural meaning of the text, illustrated both by the preceding words, and by the parallel passage in the Epistle to the Galatians: because, in the nature of the thing the testimony must precede the fruit which springs from it; and, because this plain meaning of the word of God is confirmed by the experience of innumerable children of God; yea, and by the experience of all who are convinced of sin, who can never rest till they have a direct witness: and even of the children of the world, who, not having the witness in themselves, one and all declare none can *know* his sins forgiven.

And whereas it is objected, That experience is not sufficient to prove a doctrine unsupported by Scripture—that madmen and enthusiasts of every kind have imagined such a witness;—that the design of that witness is to prove our profession genuine, which design it does not answer;—that the Scripture says, "The tree is known by its fruit;" "examine yourselves; prove your ownselves;" and, meantime, the direct witness is never referred to in all the book of God;—that it does not secure us from the greatest delusions; and, lastly,—that the change wrought in us is a sufficient testimony, unless in such trials as Christ alone suffered. We answer, 1. Experience is sufficient to *confirm* a doctrine which is grounded on Scripture: 2. Though many fancy they experience what they do not, this is no prejudice to real experience: 3. The design of that witness is, to assure us we are children of God, and this design it does answer: 4. The true witness of the Spirit is known by its fruit, "love, peace, joy;" not indeed preceding, but following it: 5. It cannot be proved that the direct, as well as the indirect witness, is not re

ferred to in that very text, "Know ye not your ownselves that Jesus Christ is in you?" 6. The Spirit of God witnessing with our spirit, does secure us from all delusion: And, lastly, we are all liable to trials wherein the testimony of our own spirit is not sufficient; wherein nothing less than the direct testimony of God's Spirit can assure us that we are his children.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 99, 100.

SECTION II.

Is grieved by Sin.

We are said to grieve the Holy Spirit by our sins, because of his immediate presence with us. They are more directly committed under his eye, and are therefore more highly offensive to him. He is pleased to look upon professing Christians as more peculiarly separated to his honour; nay, we are so closely united to him that we are said to be "one spirit with him:" and therefore every sin which we now commit, besides its own proper guilt, carries in it a fresh and infinitely high provocation. "Know ye not your ownselves," saith St. Paul, "that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" And how are they so but by his inhabitation and intimate presence with our souls? When therefore we set up the idols of earthly inclinations in our hearts, (which are properly his altar,) and bow down ourselves to serve those vicious passions which we ought to sacrifice to his will, this must needs be, in the highest degree, offensive and grievous to him. "For what concord is there between" the Holy Spirit "and Belial, or what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?"

We grieve the Holy Spirit by our sins, because they are so many contempts of the highest expression of his love, and disappoint him in his last remedy whereby he is pleased to endeavour our recovery. And thus every sin

we now commit is done in despite of all his powerful assistances, in defiance of his reproofs: an ungrateful return for infinite loving kindness!

As the Holy Spirit is the immediate minister of God's will upon earth, and transacts all the great affairs of the church of Christ; if while he pours out the riches of his grace upon us, he finds them all unsuccessful, no wonder if he appeal to all the world, in the words of the prophet, against our ingratitude: "And now, O ye men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" These, and many more such which we meet with in the Holy Scriptures, are the highest expressions of the deepest concern; such as imply the utmost unwillingness to deal severely, even with those whom yet, by all the wise methods of his grace, he could not reform. The Holy Spirit here represents himself as one who would be glad to spare sinners if he could; and therefore we may be sure it is grievous to him that by their sins they will not suffer him.

For men thus to disappoint the Holy Spirit of love, for that too is his peculiar title; to make him thus wait that he may be gracious, and pay attendance on us through our whole course of folly and vanity, and to stand by and be a witness of our stubbornness, with the importunate offers of infinite kindness in his hands, is a practice of such a nature that no gracious mind can bear the thoughts of it. It is an argument of God's unbounded mercy, that he is pleased to express that he is only grieved at it; that his indignation does not flame out against those who are thus basely ungrateful, and consume them in a moment. *Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 515, 516.

SECTION III.

The efficient Cause of Holiness.

THERE can be no point of greater importance to him who knows that it is the Holy Spirit which leads us into all truth and into all holiness, than to consider with what temper of soul we are to entertain his divine presence, so as not either to drive him from us, or to disappoint him of the gracious ends for which his abode with us is designed; which is not the amusement of our understanding, but the conversion and entire sanctification of our hearts and lives.

These words of the apostle contain a most serious and affectionate exhortation to this purpose. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

The title "Holy," applied to the Spirit of God, does not only denote that he is holy in his own nature, but that he makes us so: that he is the great fountain of holiness to his church; the Spirit from whence flows all the grace and virtue by which the stains of guilt are cleansed, and we are renewed in all holy dispositions, and again bear the image of our Creator. Great reason, therefore, there was for the apostle to give this solemn charge concerning it, and the highest obligation lies upon us all to consider it with the deepest attention.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 514.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE DIVINE LAW.

SECTION I.

Its Nature.

Now this law is an incorruptible picture of the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity. He is he who, in his essence, no man hath seen or can see, made visible to men and angels. It is the face of God unveiled; God manifested to his creatures as they are able to bear it; manifested to give, and not to destroy life—that they may see God and live. It is the heart of God disclosed to man. Yea, in some sense, we may apply to this law what the apostle says of his Son, it is απαυγασμα της δοξης' και χαρακτηρ της υποστασεως αυτυ, *the streaming forth* [or *outbeaming*] *of his glory, the express image of his person.*

"If virtue," said the ancient heathen, "could assume such a shape as that we could behold her with our eyes, what wonderful love would she excite in us!" If virtue could do this! It is done already. The law of God is all virtues in one, in such a shape as to be beheld with open face by all those whose eyes God hath enlightened. What is the law but divine virtue and wisdom assuming a visible form? What is it but the original ideas of truth and good, which were lodged in the uncreated mind from eternity, now drawn forth and clothed with such a vehicle as to appear even to human understanding?

If we survey the law of God in another point of view, it is supreme, unchangeable reason; it is unalterable rectitude; it is the everlasting fitness of all things that are or ever were created. I am sensible what a shortness, and even impropriety, there is in these and all other human

expressions, when we endeavour by these faint pictures to shadow out the deep things of God. Nevertheless, we have no better, indeed no other way, during this our infant state of existence. As we now know but "in part," so we are constrained to "prophesy," that is, speak of the things of God "in part" also. "We cannot order our speech by reason of darkness," while we are in this house of clay. While I am a child, I must "speak as a child:" but I shall soon put away childish things: for "when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away."

But to return. The law of God (speaking after the manner of men) is a copy of the Eternal Mind, a transcript of the Divine Nature: yea, it is the fairest offspring of the Everlasting Father, the brightest efflux of his essential wisdom, the visible beauty of the Most High. It is the delight and wonder of cherubim and seraphim, and all the company of heaven, and the glory and joy of every wise believer, every well instructed child of God upon earth. *Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 309, 310.

SECTION II.

Its Properties.

Such is the nature of the ever blessed law of God. I am, in the third place, to show the properties of it: not all; for that would exceed the wisdom of an angel; but those only which are mentioned in the text. These are three: it is holy, just, and good. And first, the law is holy.

In this expression the apostle does not appear to speak of its effects, but rather of its nature: as St. James, speaking of the same thing under another name, says, "The wisdom from above," (which is no other than this law,

written in our heart,) "is first pure," chap. iii, 17, *αγνη, chaste, spotless;* eternally and essentially *holy*. And consequently when it is transcribed into the life, as well as the soul, it is, (as the same apostle terms it, chap. i, 27,) *θρησκεια καθαρα και αμιαντος, pure religion, and undefiled;* or, the pure, clean, unpolluted worship of God.

It is, indeed, in the highest degree, pure, chaste, clean, holy. Otherwise it could not be the immediate offspring, and much less the express resemblance, of God, who is essential holiness. It is pure from all sin, clean and unspotted from any touch of evil. It is a chaste virgin, incapable of any defilement, of any mixture with that which is unclean or unholy. It has no fellowship with sin of any kind: for "what communion hath light with darkness?" As sin is, in its very nature, enmity to God, so his law is enmity to sin.

Therefore it is that the apostle rejects, with such abhorrence, that blasphemous supposition that the law of God is either sin itself, or the cause of sin. God forbid that we should suppose that it is the cause of sin, because it is the discoverer of it; because it detects the hidden things of darkness, and drags them out into open day. It is true, by this means, as the apostle observes, ver. 13, "sin appears to be sin." All its disguises are torn away, and it appears in its native deformity. It is true likewise that "sin, by the commandment, becomes exceeding sinful:" being now committed against light and knowledge, being stripped even of the poor plea of ignorance, it loses its excuse, as well as disguise, and becomes far more odious both to God and man. Yea, and it is true, that "sin worketh death by that which is good;" which in itself is pure and holy. When it is dragged out to light it rages the more: when it is restrained it bursts out with greater violence. Thus the apostle speaking in the person of one who was convinced of sin, but not yet delivered from it,

"Sin, taking occasion by the commandment," detecting and endeavouring to restrain it, disdained the restraint, and so much the more "wrought in me all manner of concupiscence," ver. 8, all manner of foolish and hurtful desire, which that commandment sought to restrain. Thus, "when the commandment came, sin revived," ver. 9, it fretted and raged the more. But this is no stain on the commandment. Though it is abused, it cannot be defiled. This only proves that "the heart of man is desperately wicked." But the law of God is holy still.

And it is, secondly, just. It renders to all their due. It prescribes exactly what is right, precisely what ought to be done, said, or thought, both with regard to the Author of our being, with regard to ourselves, and with regard to every creature which he has made. It is adapted, in all respects, to the nature of things, of the whole universe, and of every individual. It is suited to all the circumstances of each, and to all their mutual relations, whether such as have existed from the beginning, or such as commenced in any following period. It is exactly agreeable to the fitness of things, whether essential or accidental. It clashes with none of these in any degree, nor is ever unconnected with them. If the word be taken in that sense, there is nothing arbitrary in the law of God. Although still the whole and every part thereof is totally dependant upon his will; so that "Thy will be done," is the supreme, universal law, both in earth and heaven.

"But is the will of God the cause of his law? Is his will the original of right and wrong? Is a thing *therefore* right because God wills it—or does he will it because it is right?

I fear this celebrated question is more curious than useful. And perhaps in the manner it is usually treated of, it does not so well consist with the regard that is due

from a creature to the Creator and Governor of all things. It is hardly decent for man to call the supreme God to give an account to him; nevertheless, with awe and reverence we may speak a little: the Lord pardon us if we speak amiss!

It seems then that the whole difficulty arises from considering God's will as distinct from God: otherwise it vanishes away. For none can doubt but God is the cause of the law of God: but the will of God is God himself. It is God considered as willing thus or thus. Consequently to say that the will of God, or that God himself, is the cause of the law, is one and the same thing.

Again: if the law, the immutable rule of right and wrong, depends on the nature and fitness of things, and on their essential relations to each other; (I do not say their eternal relations, because the eternal relation of things existing in time is little less than a contradiction;) if, I say, this depends on the nature and relations of things, then it must depend on God, or the will of God; because those things themselves, with all their relations, are the works of his hands. By his will, "for his pleasure" alone they all "are and were created."

And yet it may be granted, (which is probably all that a considerate person would contend for,) that in every particular case God wills this or this, (suppose that men should honour their parents,) because it is right, agreeable to the fitness of things, to the relation wherein they stand.

The law then is right and just concerning all things. And it is good as well as just. This we may easily infer from the fountain whence it flowed. For what was this but the goodness of God? What but goodness alone inclined him to impart that divine copy of himself to the holy angels? To what else can we impute his bestowing upon man the same transcript of his own nature? And what but tender love constrained him afresh to manifest his will

to fallen man—either to Adam, or any of his seed, who, like him, were "come short of the glory of God?" Was it not mere love that moved him to publish his law, after the understandings of men were darkened? And to send his prophets to declare that law, to the blind, thoughtless children of men? Doubtless his goodness it was which raised up Enoch and Noah to be preachers of righteousness; which caused Abraham, his friend, and Isaac, and Jacob, to bear witness to his truth. It was his goodness alone which, when "darkness had covered the earth, and thick darkness the people," gave a written law to Moses, and through him to the nation whom he had chosen. It was love which explained these living oracles by David and all the prophets that followed; until, when the fulness of time was come, he sent his only begotten Son, "not to destroy the law, but to fulfil," confirm every jot and tittle thereof; till, having wrote it in the hearts of all his children, and put all his enemies under his feet, "he shall deliver up [his mediatorial] kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all."

And this law, which the goodness of God gave at first, and has preserved through all ages, is, like the fountain from whence it springs, full of goodness and benignity; it is mild and kind; it is, as the psalmist expresses it, "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." It is winning and amiable. It includes "whatsoever things are lovely or of good report. If there be any virtue, if there be any praise," before God and his holy angels, they are all comprised in this; wherein are hid all the treasures of the divine wisdom, and knowledge, and love.

And it is good in its effects, as well as in its nature. As the tree is, so are its fruits. The fruits of the law of God, written in the heart, are "righteousness, and peace, and assurance for ever." Or rather, the law itself is righteousness, filling the soul with a peace that passeth all

understanding, and causing us to rejoice evermore in the testimony of a good conscience toward God. It is not so properly a pledge, as "an earnest of our inheritance," being a part of the purchased possession. It is God made manifest in our flesh, and bringing with him eternal life; assuring us, by that pure and perfect love, that we are "sealed unto the day of redemption;" that he will "spare us as a man spareth his own son that serveth him," "in that day when he maketh up his jewels;" and that there remaineth for us "a crown of glory which fadeth not away."—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 310–312.

SECTION III.

Its Requisitions.

"The righteousness which is of the law saith, The man which doeth these things shall live by them." Constantly and perfectly observe all these things to do them, and then thou shalt live for ever. This law or covenant, (usually called the Covenant of Works,) given by God to man in paradise, required an obedience perfect in all its parts, entire, and wanting nothing, as the condition of his eternal continuance in the holiness and happiness wherein he was created.

It required that man should fulfil all righteousness, inward and outward, negative and positive: that he should not only abstain from every idle word, and avoid every evil work, but should keep every affection, every desire, every thought, in obedience to the will of God: that he should continue holy, as He which had created him was holy, both in heart and in all manner of conversation: that he should be pure in heart, even as God is pure: perfect, as his Father in heaven was perfect: that he should love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength: that he should

love every soul which God had made, even as God had loved him: that by this universal benevolence he should dwell in God, (who is love,) and God in him: that he should serve the Lord his God with all his strength, and in all things singly aim at his glory.

These were the things which the righteousness of the law required, that he who did them might live thereby. But it further required that this entire obedience to God, this inward and outward holiness, this conformity both of heart and life to his will, should be perfect in *degree.* No abatement, no allowance could possibly be made, for falling short in any degree, as to any jot or tittle, either of the outward or the inward law. If every commandment relating to outward things was obeyed, yet that was not sufficient, unless every one was obeyed with all the strength, in the highest measure, and most perfect manner. Nor did it answer the demand of this covenant to love God with every power and faculty, unless he were loved with the full capacity of each, with the whole possibility of the soul.

One thing more was indispensably required by the righteousness of the law, namely, that this universal obedience, this perfect holiness both of heart and life, should be perfectly uninterrupted also; should continue without any intermission, from the moment wherein God created man and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, until the days of his trial should be ended, and he should be confirmed in life everlasting.

The righteousness then which is of the law speaketh on this wise: "Thou, O man of God, stand fast in love, in the image of God wherein thou art made. If thou wilt remain in life, keep the commandments which are now written in thy heart. Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. Love, as thyself, every soul that he hath made. Desire nothing but God. Aim at God in every thought,

in every word and work. Swerve not, in one motion of body or soul, from him, thy mark, and the prize of thy high calling. And let all that is in thee praise his holy name, every power and faculty of thy soul, in every kind, in every degree, and at every moment of thy existence. 'This do, and thou shalt live;' thy light shall shine, thy love shall flame more and more, till thou art received up into the house of God in the heaven, to reign with him for ever and ever."—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 54.

SECTION IV.

Its Uses.

THE first use of the law, without question, is, to convince the world of sin. This is indeed the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost; who can work it without any means at all, or by whatever means it pleaseth him, however insufficient in themselves, or even improper to produce such an effect. And accordingly some there are whose hearts have been broken in pieces in a moment, either in sickness or in health, without any visible cause, or any outward means whatever; and others (one in an age) have been awakened to a sense of the "wrath of God abiding on them" by hearing that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." But it is the ordinary method of the Spirit of God to convict sinners by the law. It is this which, being set home on the conscience, generally breaketh the rock in pieces. It is more especially this part of the word of God which is ζων και ενεργης, *quick and powerful*, full of life and energy, "and sharper than any twoe-dged sword." This, in the hand of God and of those whom he hath sent, pierces through all the folds of a deceitful heart, and "divides asunder even the soul and the spirit;" yea, as it were, the very "joints and marrow." By this is the sinner discovered to himself. All his fig

leaves are torn away, and he sees that he is "wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked." The law flashes conviction on every side. He feels himself a mere sinner. He has nothing to pay. His "mouth is stopped," and he stands "guilty before God."

To slay the sinner is then the first use of the law; to destroy the life and strength wherein he trusts, and convince him that he is dead while he liveth: not only under the sentence of death, but actually dead unto God, void of all spiritual life, "dead in trespasses and sins." The second use of it is, to bring him unto life,—unto Christ, that he may live. It is true, in performing both these offices it acts the part of a severe school-master. It drives us by force, rather than draws us by love. And yet love is the spring of all. It is the spirit of love which, by this painful means, tears away our confidence in the flesh, which leaves us no broken reed whereon to trust, and so constrains the sinner, stripped of all, to cry out in the bitterness of his soul, or groan in the depth of his heart,

> "I give up every plea beside,
> Lord, I am damn'd; but thou hast died."

The third use of the law is to keep us alive. It is the grand means whereby the blessed Spirit prepares the believer for larger communications of the life of God.

I am afraid this great and important truth is little understood not only by the world, but even by many whom God hath taken out of the world, who are real children of God by faith. Many of these lay it down as an unquestioned truth, that when we come to Christ we have done with the law; and that in this sense "Christ is the end of the law to every one that believeth." "The end of the law:"—so he is "for righteousness," for justification, "to every one that believeth." Herein the law is at an end. It justifies none, but only brings them to Christ; who is also,

in another respect, the end, or scope of the law, the point at which it continually aims. But when it has brought us to him, it has yet a farther office, namely, to keep us with him. For it is continually exciting all believers, the more they see of its height, and depth, and length, and breadth, to exhort one another so much the more,

"Closer and closer let us cleave
To his beloved embrace;
Expect his fulness to receive,
And grace to answer grace."

Allowing then that every believer has done with the law, as it means the Jewish ceremonial law, or the entire Mosaic dispensation; (for these Christ hath taken out of the way;) yea, allowing we have done with the moral law as a means of procuring our justification; for we are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus;" yet, in another sense, we have not done with this law: for it is still of unspeakable use, first, in convincing us of the sin that yet remains both in our hearts and lives, and thereby keeping us close to Christ, that his blood may cleanse us every moment; secondly, in deriving strength from our Head into his living members, whereby he empowers them to do what his law commands; and thirdly, in confirming our hope of whatsoever it commands and we have not yet attained,—of receiving grace upon grace, till we are in actual possession of the fulness of his promises.

How clearly does this agree with the experience of every true believer! While he cries out, "O what love have I unto thy law! all the day long is my study in it;" he sees daily, in that divine mirror, more and more of his own sinfulness. He sees more and more clearly, that he is still a sinner in all things,—that neither his heart nor his ways are right before God; and that every moment sends him to Christ. This shows him the meaning of what is written, "Thou shalt make a plate of pure gold,

and grave upon it, Holiness to the Lord. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead," [the type of our great High Priest,] "that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow, in all their holy gifts:" [so far are our prayers or holy things from atoning for the rest of our sin!] "And it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord," Exod. xxviii, 36, 38.

To explain this by a single instance: the law says, "Thou shalt not kill;" and hereby, (as our Lord teaches,) forbids not only outward acts, but every unkind word or thought. Now the more I look into this perfect law, the more I feel how far I come short of it; and the more I feel this, the more I feel the need of his blood to atone for all my sin, and of his Spirit to purify my heart, and make me "perfect and entire, lacking nothing."

Therefore I cannot spare the law one moment, no more than I can spare Christ: seeing now I want it as much, to keep me to Christ, as I ever wanted it to bring me to him. Otherwise this "evil heart of unbelief" would immediately "depart from the living God." Indeed each is continually sending me to the other,—the law to Christ, and Christ to the law. On the one hand, the height and depth of the law constrain me to fly to the love of God in Christ; on the other, the love of God in Christ endears the law to me "above gold or precious stones;" seeing I know every part of it is a gracious promise which my Lord will fulfil in its season.

Who art thou, then, O man, that "judgest the law, and speakest evil of the law?" That rankest it with sin, Satan, and death, and sendest them all to hell together? The Apostle James esteemed judging or "speaking evil of the law," so enormous a piece of wickedness that he knew not how to aggravate the guilt of judging our brethren more than by showing it included this. "So now," says

he, "thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge!" A judge of that which God hath ordained to judge thee! So thou hast set up thyself in the judgment seat of Christ, and cast down the rule whereby he will judge the world! O take knowledge what advantage Satan hath gained over thee; and, for the time to come, never think or speak lightly of, much less dress up as a scarecrow, this blessed instrument of the grace of God! Yea, love and value it for the sake of Him from whom it came, and of Him to whom it leads. Let it be thy glory and joy, next to the cross of Christ. Declare its praise, and make it honourable before all men.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 312–314.

SECTION V.

Its Connection with the Gospel.

From all this we may learn that there is no contrariety at all between the law and the gospel; that there is no need for the law to pass away in order to the establishing the gospel. Indeed neither of them supersedes the other, but they agree perfectly well together. Yea, the very same words, considered in different respects, are parts both of the law and of the gospel: if they are considered as commandments, they are parts of the law; if as promises, of the gospel. Thus, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," when considered as a commandment, is a branch of the law; when regarded as a promise, is an essential part of the gospel; the gospel being no other than the commands of the law proposed by way of promise. Accordingly, poverty of spirit, purity of heart, and whatever else is enjoined in the holy law of God, are no other, when viewed in a gospel light, than so many great and precious promises.

There is, therefore, the closest connection that can be conceived between the law and the gospel. On the one

hand, the law continually makes way for, and points us to, the gospel; on the other, the gospel continually leads us to a more exact fulfilling of the law. The law, for instance, requires us to love God, to love our neighbour, to be meek, humble, or holy: we feel that we are not sufficient for these things; yea, that "with man this is impossible." But we see a promise of God to give us that love, and to make us humble, meek, and holy: we lay hold of this gospel, of these glad tidings; it is done unto us according to our faith; and "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us," through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

We may yet further observe, that every command in Holy Writ is only a covered promise. For by that solemn declaration, "This is the covenant I will make after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws in your minds, and write them in your hearts;"—God hath engaged to give whatsoever he commands. Does he command us then to "pray without ceasing," to "rejoice evermore," to be "holy as he is holy?" It is enough: he will work in us this very thing. It shall be unto us according to his word.—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 223.

SECTION VI.

Confirmed and perpetuated by Christ.

The moral law, contained in the ten commandments, and enforced by the prophets, Christ did not take away. It was not the design of his coming to revoke any part of this. This is a law which never can be broken, which "stands fast as the faithful witness in heaven." The moral stands on an entirely different foundation from the ceremonial or ritual law, which was only designed for a temporary restraint upon a disobedient and stiff-necked people; whereas this was from the beginning of the world, being

"written, not on tables of stone," but on the hearts of all the children of men, when they came out of the hands of the Creator. And, however the letters once wrote by the finger of God are now in a great measure defaced by sin, yet can they not wholly be blotted out, while we have any consciousness of good and evil. Every part of this law must remain in force upon all mankind, and in all ages; as not depending either on time or place, or any other circumstances liable to change, but on the nature of God and the nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other.

"I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Some have conceived our Lord to mean—I am come to fulfil this, by my entire and perfect obedience to it. And it cannot be doubted but he did, in this sense, fulfil every part of it. But this does not appear to be what he intends here, being foreign to the scope of his present discourse. Without question, his meaning in this place is, (consistently with all that goes before and follows after,) I am come to establish it in its fulness, in spite of all the glosses of men: I am come to place in a full and clear view whatsoever was dark or obscure therein: I am come to declare the true and full import of every part of it; to show the length and breadth, the entire extent, of every commandment contained therein, and the height and depth, the inconceivable purity and spirituality of it in all its branches.

And this our Lord has abundantly performed in the preceding and subsequent part of the discourse before us; in which he has not introduced a new religion into the world, but the same which was from the beginning;—a religion, the substance of which is, without question, as old as the creation, being coeval with man, and having proceeded from God at the very time when "man became a living soul;" (the *substance*, I say; for some circumstances of it now relate to man as a fallen crea-

ture;)—a religion witnessed to, both by the law and by the prophets, in all succeeding generations. Yet was it never so fully explained, nor so thoroughly understood, till the great Author of it himself condescended to give mankind this authentic comment on all the essential branches of it; at the same time declaring it should never be changed, but remain in force to the end of the world.

"For verily I say unto you," (a solemn preface which denotes both the importance and certainty of what is spoken,) "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

"One jot:" it is literally *not one iota*, not the most inconsiderable vowel: "or one tittle," μια κεραια, one *corner* or *point* of a consonant. It is a proverbial expression, which signifies that no one commandment contained in the moral law, nor the least part of any one, however inconsiderable it might seem, should ever be disannulled.

"Shall in no wise pass from the law:" ου μη παρελθη απο του νομου. The double negative here used strengthens the sense, so as to admit of no contradiction; and the word παρελθη, it may be observed, is not barely *future*, declaring what *will* be; but has likewise the force of an *imperative*, ordering what *shall* be. It is a word of authority, expressing the sovereign will and power of Him that spake; of him whose word is the law of heaven and earth, and stands fast for ever and ever.

"One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass, till heaven and earth pass;" or, as it is expressed immediately after, εως αν παντα γενηται, *till all* (or rather *all things*) *be fulfilled*, till the consummation of all things. Here is therefore no room for that poor evasion, (with which some have delighted themselves greatly,) that "no part of the law was to pass away, till *all the law* was fulfilled: but it has been fulfilled by Christ; and therefore now must pass for the gospel to be established." Not so: the word *all* does not mean

all the law, but all things in the universe; as neither has the term *fulfilled* any reference to the law, but to all things in heaven and earth.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 221–223.

SECTION VII.

Established by Faith.

How may we establish the law in our own hearts, so that it may have its full influence on our lives? This can only be done by faith.

Faith alone it is which effectually answers this end, as we learn from daily experience. For so long as we walk by faith, not by sight, we go swiftly on in the way of holiness. While we steadily look, not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen, we are more and more crucified to the world, and the world crucified to us. Let but the eye of the soul be constantly fixed, not on the things which are temporal, but on those which are eternal, and our affections are more and more loosened from earth, and fixed on things above. So that faith, in general, is the most direct and effectual means of promoting all righteousness and true holiness; of establishing the holy and spiritual law in the hearts of them that believe.

And by faith, taken in its more particular meaning for a confidence in a pardoning God, we establish his law in our own hearts in a still more effectual manner. For there is no motive which so powerfully inclines us to love God, as the sense of the love of God in Christ. Nothing enables us, like a piercing conviction of this, to give our hearts to Him who was given for us. And from this principle of grateful love to God arises love to our brother also. Neither can we avoid loving our neighbour, if we truly believe the love wherewith God hath loved us. Now this love to man, grounded on faith and love to God, "worketh no ill

to [our] neighbour:" consequently it is, as the apostle observes, "the fulfilling of the [whole negative] law." "For this, thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Neither is love content with barely working no evil to our neighbour. It continually incites us to do good, as we have time and opportunity; to do good in every possible kind, and in every possible degree, to all men. It is therefore the fulfilling of the positive likewise, as well as of the negative law of God.

Nor does faith fulfil either the negative or positive law as to the external part only; but it works inwardly by love, to the purifying of the heart, the cleansing it from all vile affections. Every one that hath this faith in himself "purifieth himself even as He is pure:" purifieth himself from every earthly, sensual desire; from all vile and inordinate affections; yea, from the whole of that carnal mind which is enmity against God. At the same time, if it have its perfect work, it fills him with all goodness, righteousness, and truth. It brings all heaven into his soul, and causes him to walk in the light, even as God is in the light.

Let us thus endeavour to establish the law in ourselves; not sinning "because we are under grace," but rather using all the power we receive thereby "to fulfil all righteousness." Calling to mind what light we received from God while his Spirit was convincing us of sin, let us beware we do not put out that light; what we had then attained let us hold fast. Let nothing induce us to build again what we have destroyed; to resume any thing, small or great, which we then clearly saw was not for the glory of God, or the profit of our own soul; or to neglect any thing, small or great, which we could not then neglect

without a check from our own conscience. To increase and perfect the light which we had before, let us now add the light of faith. Confirm we the former gift of God by a deeper sense of whatever he had then shown us; by a greater tenderness of conscience, and a more exquisite sensibility of sin. Walking now with joy, and not with fear, in a clear steady sight of things eternal, we shall look on pleasure, wealth, praise, all the things of earth, as on bubbles upon the water; counting nothing important, nothing desirable, nothing worth a deliberate thought, but only what is "within the veil," where Jesus "sitteth at the right hand of God."—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 327, 328.

"We establish the law," both by showing its full extent and spiritual meaning, and by calling all to that living way whereby "the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in them." These, while they trust in the blood of Christ alone, use all the ordinances which he hath appointed, do all the "good works which he had before prepared that they should walk therein," and enjoy and manifest all holy and heavenly tempers, even the same mind that was in Christ Jesus.—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 17.

CHAPTER VII.

OF MAN.

SECTION I.

His original State.

"The Lord God [literally, Jehovah, the Gods; that is, One and Three] created man in his own image;"—in his own *natural* image, as to his better part; that is, a spirit, as God is a spirit; endued with understanding; which, if not the essence, seems to be the most essential pro-

perty of a spirit. And probably the human spirit, like the angelical, then discerned truth by intuition. Hence he named every creature, as soon as he saw it, according to its inmost nature. Yet his knowledge was limited, as he was a creature: ignorance therefore was inseparable from him; but error was not; it does not appear that he was mistaken in any thing. But he was capable of mistaking, of being deceived, although not necessitated to it.

He was endued also with a will, with various affections; (which are only the will exerting itself various ways;) that he might love, desire, and delight, in that which is good: otherwise his understanding had been to no purpose. He was likewise endued with *liberty;* a power of choosing what was good, and refusing what was not so. Without this both the will and the understanding would have been utterly useless. Indeed, without liberty, man had been so far from being a *free agent*, that he could have been no *agent* at all. For every *unfree being* is purely passive; not active in any degree. Have you a sword in your hand? Does a man, stronger than you, seize your hand, and force you to wound a third person? In this you are no agent, any more than the sword: the hand is as passive as the steel. So in every possible case. He that is not free, is not an agent, but a patient.

It seems, therefore, that every spirit in the universe, as such, is endued with *understanding*, and, in consequence, with a *will*, and with a measure of *liberty;* and that these three are inseparably united in every intelligent nature. And observe: *liberty necessitated*, or overruled, is really no liberty at all. It is a contradiction in terms. It is the same as *unfree freedom;* that is, downright nonsense.

It may be further observed, (and it is an important observation,) that where there is no liberty, there can be no moral good or evil; no virtue nor vice. The fire warms us; yet it is not capable of virtue: it burns us; yet this

is no vice. There is no virtue, but where an intelligent being knows, loves, and chooses what is good; nor is there any vice, but where such a being knows, loves, and chooses what is evil.

And God created man not only in his natural, but likewise in his own *moral* image. He created him not only "in knowledge," but also in righteousness and true holiness. As his understanding was without blemish, perfect in its kind; so were all his affections. They were all set right, and duly exercised on their proper objects. And as a free agent, he steadily chose whatever was good, according to the direction of his understanding. In so doing he was unspeakably happy; dwelling in God, and God in him; having an uninterrupted fellowship with the Father and the Son, through the eternal Spirit, and the continual testimony of his conscience, that all his ways were good and acceptable to God.

Yet his liberty (as was observed before) necessarily included a power of choosing or refusing either good or evil. Indeed, it has been doubted whether man could then choose evil, knowing it to be such. But it cannot be doubted he might mistake evil for good. He was not infallible; therefore not impeccable. And this unravels the whole difficulty of the grand question, "Unde malum?" "How came evil into the world?" It came from "Lucifer, son of the morning." It was the work of the devil. "For the devil," saith the apostle, "sinneth from the beginning;" that is, was the first sinner in the universe, the author of sin, the first being who, by the abuse of his liberty, introduced evil into the creation.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 69, 70.

As God is love, so man dwelling in love, dwelt in God, and God in him. God made him to be an "image of his own eternity," an incorruptible picture of the God of glory. He was accordingly pure, as God is pure, from every spot

of sin. He knew not evil in any kind or degree, but was inwardly and outwardly sinless and undefiled. He "loved the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his mind, and soul, and strength."

To man thus upright and perfect God gave a perfect law, to which he required full and perfect obedience. He required full obedience in every point, and this to be performed without any intermission, from the moment man became a living soul till the time of his trial should be ended. No allowance was made for any falling short. As indeed, there was no need of any; man being altogether equal to the task assigned, and thoroughly furnished for every good word and work.

To the entire law of love which was written in his heart, (against which, perhaps, he could not sin directly,) it seemed good to the sovereign wisdom of God to superadd one positive law: "Thou shalt not eat of the fruit of the tree that groweth in the midst of the garden;" annexing that penalty thereto, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Such then was the state of man in paradise. By the free, unmerited love of God, he was holy and happy: he knew, loved, enjoyed God, which is, in substance, life everlasting. And in this life of love he was to continue for ever, if he continued to obey God in all things; but, if he disobeyed in any, he was to forfeit all. "In that day," said God, "thou shalt surely die."—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 45.

SECTION II.

His fallen State.

Man did disobey God. He "ate of the tree of which God commanded him saying, Thou shalt not eat of it." And in that day he was condemned by the righteous judg-

ment of God. Then also the sentence, whereof he was warned before, began to take place upon him. For the moment he tasted that fruit he died. His soul died, was separated from God; separate from whom the soul has no more life than the body when separate from the soul. His body likewise became corruptible and mortal; so that death then took hold on this also. And being already dead in spirit, dead to God, dead in sin, he hastened on to death everlasting; to the destruction both of body and soul in the fire never to be quenched.

Thus "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And so death passed upon all men," as being contained in him who was the common father and representative of us all. Thus, "through the offence of one," all are dead, dead to God, dead in sin, dwelling in a corruptible, mortal body, shortly to be dissolved, and under the sentence of death eternal. For as "by one man's disobedience" all "were made sinners;" so, by that offence of one, "judgment came upon all men to condemnation," Rom. v, 12, &c.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 45, 46.

How exactly does matter of fact, do all things around us, even the face of the whole world, agree with this account! Open your eyes! Look around you! See darkness that may be felt; see ignorance and error; see vice in ten thousand forms; see consciousness of guilt, fear, sorrow, shame, remorse, covering the face of the earth! See misery, the daughter of sin. See, on every side, sickness and pain, inhabitants of every nation under heaven; driving on the poor, helpless sons of men, in every age, to the gates of death! So they have done well nigh from the beginning of the world. So they will do till the consummation of all things.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 36.

In Adam all died, all humam kind, all the children of men who were then in Adam's loins. The natural consequence of this is, that every one descended from him

comes into the world spiritually dead, dead to God, wholly dead in sin; entirely void of the life of God; void of the image of God, of all that righteousness and holiness wherein Adam was created. Instead of this, every man born into the world now bears the image of the devil, in pride and self-will; the image of the beast, in sensual appetites and desires. This, then, is the foundation of the new birth,—the entire corruption of our nature. Hence it is, that being born in sin, we must be "born again." Hence every one that is born of a woman must be born of the Spirit of God.—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 401.

The state of a *natural man.* This the Scripture represents as a state of sleep: the voice of God to him is, "Awake, thou that sleepest." For his soul is in a deep sleep: his spiritual senses are not awake: they discern neither spiritual good nor evil. The eyes of his understanding are closed; they are sealed together, and see not. Clouds and darkness continually rest upon them; for he lies in the valley of the shadow of death. Hence, having no inlets for the knowledge of spiritual things, all the avenues of his soul being shut up, he is in gross, stupid ignorance of whatever he is most concerned to know. He is utterly ignorant of God, knowing nothing concerning him as he ought to know. He is totally a stranger to the law of God, as to its true, inward, spiritual meaning. He has no conception of that evangelical holiness without which no man shall see the Lord; nor of the happiness which they only find whose "life is hid with Christ in God."

And, for this very reason, because he is fast asleep, he is, in some sense, at rest; because he is blind, he is also secure: he saith, "Tush, there shall no harm happen unto me." The darkness which covers him on every side keeps him in a kind of peace; so far as peace can consist with the works of the devil, and with an earthly, devilish

mind. He *sees* not that he stands on the edge of the pit: therefore he *fears* it not. He cannot *tremble* at the danger he does not *know*. He has not understanding enough to fear. Why is it that he is in no dread of God? Because he is totally ignorant of him: if not saying in his heart, "There is no God;" or, that "he sitteth on the circle of the heavens, and humbleth not himself to behold the things which are done on the earth;" yet, satisfying himself as well, to all Epicurean intents and purposes, by saying, "God is merciful;" confounding and swallowing up all at once, in that unwieldy idea of mercy, all his holiness and essential hatred of sin; all his justice, wisdom, and truth. He is in no dread of the vengeance denounced against those who obey not the blessed law of God, because he understands it not. He imagines the main point is, to *do thus*, to be *outwardly* blameless; and sees not that it extends to every temper, desire, thought, motion of the heart. Or he fancies that the obligation hereto is ceased; that Christ came to "destroy the law and the prophets;" to save his people *in*, not *from* their sins; to bring them to heaven without holiness:—notwithstanding his own words, "Not one jot or tittle of the law shall pass away till all things are fulfilled;" and, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

He is secure, because he is utterly ignorant of himself. Hence he talks of "repenting by and by;" he does not indeed exactly know when, but some time or other before he dies: taking it for granted that this is quite in his own power. For what should hinder his doing it, if he will? If he does but once set a resolution, no fear but he will make it good!

But this ignorance never so strongly glares as in those who are termed *men of learning*. If a natural man be

one of these, he can talk at large of his rational faculties, of the freedom of his will, and the absolute necessity of such freedom, in order to constitute man a moral agent. He reads, and argues, and proves to a demonstration, that every man may do as he will; may dispose his own heart to evil or good, as it seems best in his own eyes. Thus the god of this world spreads a double veil of blindness over his heart lest, by any means, "the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine" upon it.

From the same ignorance of himself and God, there may sometimes arise, in the natural man, a kind of *joy* in congratulating himself upon his own wisdom and goodness: and what the world calls joy, he may often possess. He may have pleasure in various kinds; either in gratifying the desires of the flesh, or the desire of the eye, or the pride of life; particularly if he have large possessions; if he enjoy an affluent fortune; then he may "clothe" himself "in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day." And so long as he thus doeth well unto himself, men will doubtless speak good of him. They will say, "He is a happy man." For, indeed, this is the sum of worldly happiness; to dress, and visit, and talk, and eat, and drink, and rise up to play.

It is not surprising, if one in such circumstances as these, dosed with the opiates of flattery and sin, should imagine, among his other waking dreams, that he walks in great *liberty*. How easily may he persuade himself that he is at liberty from all *vulgar errors*, and from the *prejudice* of education, judging exactly right, and keeping clear of all extremes. "I am free (may he say) from all the *enthusiasm* of weak and narrow souls; from *superstition*, the disease of fools and cowards, always righteous overmuch; and from *bigotry*, continually incident to those who have not a free and generous way of thinking." And too sure it is, that he is altogether free from the "wisdom which

cometh from above," from holiness, from the religion of the heart, from the whole mind which was in Christ.

For all this time he is the servant of sin. He commits sin, more or less, day by day. Yet he is not troubled: he "is in no bondage," as some speak; he feels no condemnation. He contents himself, (even though he should profess to believe that the Christian revelation is of God,) with, "Man is frail. We are all weak. Every man has his infirmity." Perhaps he quotes Scripture: "Why, does not Solomon say, The righteous man falls into sin seven times a day? And, doubtless, they are all hypocrites or enthusiasts who pretend to be better than their neighbours." If, at any time, a serious thought fix upon him, he stifles it as soon as possible with, "Why should I fear, since God is merciful, and Christ died for sinners?" Thus he remains a willing servant of sin, content with the bondage of corruption; inwardly and outwardly unholy, and satisfied therewith; not only not conquering sin, but not striving to conquer, particularly that sin which doth so easily beset him.

Such is the state of every *natural man;* whether he be a gross, scandalous transgressor, or a more reputable and decent sinner, having the form, though not the power of godliness.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 76–78.

SECTION III.

His Nature and Functions.

HERE is a curious machine, "fearfully and wonderfully made." It is a little portion of *earth*, the particles of which cohering, I know not how, lengthen into innumerable fibres, a thousand times finer than hairs. These, crossing each other in all directions, are strangely wrought into membranes; and these membranes are as strangely

wrought into arteries, veins, nerves, and glands; all of which contain various fluids, constantly circulating through the whole machine.

In order to the continuance of this circulation a considerable quantity of air is necessary. And this is continually taken into the habit by an engine fitted for that very purpose. But as a particle of ethereal *fire* is connected with every particle of air, (and a particle of water too,) so both air, water, and fire, are received into the lungs together; where the fire is separated from the air and water, both of which are continually thrown out; while the fire, extracted from them, is received into, and mingled with the blood. Thus the human body is composed of all the four elements, duly proportioned and mixed together: the last of which constitutes the vital flame whence flows the animal heat.

Let me consider this yet a little further. Is not the primary use of the lungs to administer fire to the body, which is continually extracted from the air by that curious fire-pump? By inspiration it takes in the air, water, and fire together. In its numerous cells, (commonly called air-vessels,) it detaches the fire from the air and water. This then mixes with the blood, as every air-vessel has a blood-vessel connected with it: and as soon as the fire is extracted from it the air and water are thrown out by expiration.

Without this spring of life, this vital fire, there could be no circulation of the blood: consequently no motion of any of the fluids; of the nervous fluid in particular: (if it be not rather, as is highly probable, this very fire we are speaking of.) Therefore there could not be any sensation, nor any muscular motion. I say there could be no circulation; for the cause usually assigned for this, namely, the force of the heart, is altogether inadequate to the supposed effect. No one supposes the force of the heart, in a strong man, to be more than equal to the weight

of three thousand pounds; whereas it would require a force equal to the weight of a hundred thousand pounds to propel the blood from the heart through all the arteries. This can only be effected by the ethereal fire contained in the blood itself, assisted by the elastic force of the arteries through which it circulates.

But beside this strange compound of the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire; I find something in me of quite a different nature, nothing akin to any of these. I find something in me that *thinks;* which neither earth, water, air, fire, nor any mixture of them, can possibly do: something which sees, and hears, and smells, and tastes, and feels; all which are so many modes of thinking. It goes further: having perceived objects by any of these senses, it forms inward ideas of them. It *judges* concerning them; it sees whether they agree or disagree with each other. It *reasons* concerning them; that is, infers one proposition from another. It reflects upon its own operations; it is endued with imagination and memory; and any of its operations, judgment in particular, may be subdivided into many others.

But by what means shall I learn in what part of my body this thinking principle is lodged? Some eminent men have affirmed, that it is "all in all, and all in every part." But I learn nothing from this: they seem to be words that have no determinate meaning. Let us then appeal, in the best manner we can, to our own experience. From this I learn that this thinking principle is not lodged in my hands, or feet, or legs, or arms. It is not lodged in the trunk of my body. Any one may be assured of this by a little reflection. I cannot conceive that it is situated in my bones, or in any part of my flesh. So far as I can judge, it seems to be situated in some part of my head; but whether in the pineal gland, or in any part of the brain, I am not able to determine.

But further: this inward principle, wherever it is lodged, is capable not only of thinking, but likewise of love, hatred, joy, sorrow, desire, fear, hope, &c., and a whole train of other inward emotions, which are commonly called passions or affections. They are styled, by a general appellation, the will; and are mixed and diversified a thousand ways. And they seem to be the only spring of action in that inward principle I call the soul.

But what is my soul? It is an important question, and not easy to be resolved.

> "Hear'st thou submissive, but a lowly birth?
> Some separate particles of finer earth?
> A plain effect which nature must beget,
> As motion dictates, and as atoms meet?"

I cannot in any wise believe this. My reason recoils at it. I cannot reconcile myself to the thought that the soul is either earth, water, or fire; or a composition of all of them put together: were it only for this plain reason: all these, whether separate or compounded in any possible way, are purely *passive* still. None of them has the least power of self-motion: none of them can move itself. "But (says one) does not that ship move?" Yes, but not of itself; it is moved by the water on which it swims. "But then the water moves." True; but the water is moved by the wind, the current of air. "But the air moves." It is moved by the ethereal fire, which is attached to every particle of it; and this fire itself is moved by the Almighty Spirit, the source of all the motion in the universe. But my soul has from him an inward principle of motion, whereby it governs at pleasure every part of the body.

It governs every motion of the body; only with this exception, which is a marvellous instance of the wise and gracious providence of the great Creator: there are some

motions of the body which are absolutely necessary for the continuance of life: such as the dilation and contraction of the lungs; the systole and diastole of the heart; the pulsation of the arteries, and the circulation of the blood. These are not governed by me at pleasure: they do not wait the direction of my will. And it is well they do not. It is highly proper that all the vital motions should be involuntary; going on, whether we advert to them or not. Were it otherwise, grievous inconveniences might follow. A man might put an end to his own life whenever he pleased, by suspending the motion of his heart, or of his lungs; or he might lose his life by mere inattention; by not remembering, not adverting to the circulation of his blood. But these vital motions being excepted, I direct the motions of my whole body. By a single act of my will, I put my head, eyes, hands, or any part of my body into motion: although I no more comprehend how I do this than I can comprehend how the "THREE that bear record in heaven are ONE."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 402–404.

SECTION IV.

He is under the Power of Sin.

Now he truly desires to break loose from sin, and begins to struggle with it. But though he strive with all his might, he cannot conquer: sin is mightier than he. He would fain escape; but he is so fast in prison that he cannot get forth. He resolves against sin, but yet sins on: he sees the snare, and abhors, and runs into it. So much does his boasted reason avail,—only to enhance his guilt, and increase his misery! Such is the freedom of his will; free only to evil; free to "drink in iniquity like water;" to wander further and further from the living God, and do more "despite to the Spirit of grace."

The more he strives, wishes, labours to be free, the more does he feel his chains, the grievous chains of sin, wherewith Satan binds and "leads him captive at his will:" his servant he is, though he repine ever so much; though he rebel, he cannot prevail. He is still in bondage and fear by reason of sin: generally of some outward sin, to which he is peculiarly disposed, either by nature, custom, or outward circumstances: but always of some inward sin, some evil temper, or unholy affection. And the more he frets against it, the more it prevails; he may bite, but cannot break his chain. Thus he toils without end, repenting and sinning, and repenting and sinning again, till at length the poor, sinful, helpless wretch is even at his wit's end; and can barely groan, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

This whole struggle of one who is *under the law*, under the *spirit of fear and bondage*, is beautifully described by the apostle in the foregoing chapter, (Rom. vii,) speaking in the person of an awakened man. "I," saith he, "was alive without the law once," ver. 9. I had much life, wisdom, strength, and virtue; so I thought: but "when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died:" when the commandment, in its spiritual meaning, came to my heart, with the power of God, my inbred sin was stirred up, fretted, inflamed, and all my virtue died away. "And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me," ver. 10, 11: it came upon me unawares; slew all my hopes; and plainly showed, in the midst of life I was in death. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good," ver. 12: I no longer lay the blame on this, but on the corruption of my own heart. I acknowledge that "the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin,"

ver. 14: I now see both the spiritual nature of the law; and my own carnal, devilish heart, *sold under sin*, totally enslaved: (like slaves bought with money, who were absolutely at their master's disposal:) "For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, I do not; but what I hate, that I do," ver. 15: such is the bondage under which I groan; such the tyranny of my hard master. "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do," ver. 18, 19. "I find a law [an inward constraining power] that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in [or consent to] the law of God, after the inward man," ver. 21, 22, in my *mind:* so the apostle explains himself in the words that immediately follow: (and so *ο εσω ανθρωπος*, *the inward man*, is understood in all other Greek writers:) "But I see another law in my members [another constraining power] warring against the law of my mind, or inward man, and bringing me into captivity to the law [or power] of sin," ver. 23: dragging me, as it were, at my conqueror's chariot wheels, into the very thing which my soul abhors. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" ver. 24. Who shall deliver me from this helpless, dying life, from this bondage of sin and misery? Till this is done, "I myself" (or rather, that I, *αυτος εγω*, that man I am now personating) "with the mind," or inward man, "serve the law of God;" my mind, my conscience, is on God's side; "but with my flesh," with my body, "the law of sin," ver. 25, being hurried away by a force I cannot resist.

How lively a portraiture is this of one *under the law!* One who feels the burden he cannot shake off; who pants after liberty, power, and love, but is in fear and bondage still; until the time that God answers the wretched man, crying out, "Who shall deliver me" from this bondage of

sin, from this body of death?—"The grace of God, through Jesus Christ thy Lord."—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 80, 81.

SECTION V.

The Design of his Creation.

For what end is life bestowed upon the children of men? Why were we sent into the world? For one sole end, and for no other—to prepare for eternity. For this alone we live. For this, and no other purpose, is our life either given or continued. It pleased the all-wise God, at the season which he saw best, to arise in the greatness of his strength, and create the heavens and the earth, and all things that are therein. Having prepared all things for him, "he created man in his own image, after his own likeness." And what was the end of his creation? It was one, and no other—that he might know, and love, and enjoy, and serve his great Creator to all eternity.

But "man, being in honour, continued not;" but became lower than even the beasts that perish. He wilfully and openly rebelled against God, and cast off his allegiance to the Majesty of heaven. Hereby he instantly lost both the favour of God, and the image of God wherein he was created. As he was then incapable of obtaining happiness by the old, God established a new covenant with man; the terms of which were no longer, "Do this and live," but "Believe, and thou shalt be saved." But still the end of man is one and the same; only it stands on another foundation. For the plain tenor of it is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God hath given to be the propitiation for thy sins, and thou shalt be saved,"—first, from the guilt of sin, having redemption through his blood; then from the power, which shall have no more dominion over thee; and then from the root of it, into the whole image of God. And being restored both to the favour and

image of God, thou shalt know, love, and serve him to all eternity. So that still the end of his life, the life of every man born into the world, is to know, love, and serve his great Creator.

And let it be observed, as this is the end, so it is the whole and sole end, for which every man upon the face of the earth, for which every one of *you* were brought into the world, and endued with a living soul. Remember, you were born for nothing else. You live for nothing else. Your life is continued to you upon earth for no other purpose than this, that you may know, love, and serve God on earth, and enjoy him to all eternity. Consider! you were not created to please your senses, to gratify your imagination, to gain money, or the praise of men; to seek happiness in any created good, in any thing under the sun. All this is "walking in a vain shadow;" it is leading a restless, miserable life, in order to a miserable eternity. On the contrary, you were created for this, and for no other purpose—by seeking and finding happiness in God on earth, to secure the glory of God in heaven. Therefore let your heart continually say, "This one thing I do"—having one thing in view, remembering why I was born, and why I am continued in life—"I press to the mark." I aim at the one end of my being, God; even at "God in Christ reconciling the world to himself." He shall be my God for ever and ever, and my guide even unto death.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 405, 406.

SECTION VI.

His Accountability.

There is no employment of our time, no action or conversation, that is purely indifferent. All is good or bad, because all our time, as every thing we have, is not our own. All these are, as our Lord speaks, *τα αλλοτρια*,

the property of another; of God our creator. Now these either are or are not employed according to his will. If they are so employed, all is good; if they are not, all is evil. Again: it is his will that we should continually grow in grace, and in the living knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: consequently, every thought, word, and work, whereby this knowledge is increased, whereby we grow in grace, is good; and every one whereby this knowledge is not increased, is truly and properly evil.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 456, 457.

In what respects are we now God's stewards? We are now indebted to him for all we have. But although a debtor is obliged to return what he has received, yet until the time of payment comes, he is at liberty to use it as he pleases. It is not so with a steward: he is not at liberty to use what is lodged in his hands as *he* pleases, but as his master pleases. He has no right to dispose of any thing which is in his hands but according to the will of his lord. For he is not the proprietor of any of these things, but barely intrusted with them by another; and entrusted on this express condition, that he shall dispose of all at his master's orders. Now this is exactly the case of every man with relation to God. We are not at liberty to use what he has lodged in our hands as *we* please, but as he pleases, who alone is the possessor of heaven and earth, and the Lord of every creature. We have no right to dispose of any thing we have but according to his will, seeing we are not proprietors of any of these things; they are all, as our Lord speaks, *αλλοτρια, belonging to another person;* nor is any thing properly *our own*, in the land of our pilgrimage. We shall not receive *τα ιδια, our own things*, till we come to our own country. Eternal things only are our own: with all these temporal things we are barely intrusted by another, the Disposer and Lord of all. And he intrusts us with them on this express condition,

that we use them only as our Master's goods, and according to the particular directions which he has given us in his word.

On this condition he hath intrusted us our souls, our bodies, our goods, and whatever other talents we have received: but in order to impress this weighty truth on our hearts, it will be needful to come to particulars.

And, first, God has intrusted us with our soul, an immortal spirit, made in the image of God; together with all the powers and faculties thereof, understanding, imagination, memory, will, and a train of affections, either included in it, or closely dependant upon it—love and hatred, joy and sorrow, respecting present good and evil, desire and aversion, hope and fear, respecting that which is to come. All these St. Paul seems to include in two words when he says, "the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds." Perhaps, indeed, the latter word, *νοηματα*, might rather be rendered *thoughts;* provided we take that word in its most extensive sense, for every perception of the mind, whether active or passive.

Now of all these it is certain we are only stewards. God has intrusted us with these powers and faculties, not that we may employ them according to our own will, but according to the express orders which he has given us; although it is true, that in doing his will, we most effectually secure our own happiness, seeing it is herein only that we can be happy, either in time or in eternity. Thus we are to use our understanding, our imagination, our memory, wholly to the glory of Him that gave them. Thus our will is to be wholly given up to Him, and all our affections to be regulated as he directs. We are to love and hate, to rejoice and grieve, to desire and shun, to hope and fear, according to the rule which He prescribes whose we are, and whom we are to serve in all things. Even our thoughts are not our own in this sense; they are not at

our own disposal; but for every deliberate motion of our mind we are accountable to our great Master.

God has, secondly, intrusted us with our bodies, (those exquisitely wrought machines, so "fearfully and wonderfully made,") with all the powers and members thereof. He has intrusted us with the organs of sense; of sight, hearing, and the rest: but none of these are given us as our own, to be employed according to our own will. None of these are lent us in such a sense as to leave us at liberty to use them as we please for a season. No: we have received them on these very terms, that, as long as they abide with us, we should employ them all in that very manner, and no other, which he appoints.

It is on the same terms that he imparted to us that most excellent talent of speech. "Thou hast given me a tongue," says the ancient writer, "that I may praise thee therewith." For this purpose was it given to all the children of men, to be employed in glorifying God. Nothing therefore is more ungrateful, or more absurd, than to think or say, "Our tongues are our own." That cannot be, unless we have created ourselves, and so are independent of the Most High. Nay, but "it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves." The manifest consequence is, that he is still Lord over us, in this, as in all other respects. It follows that there is not a word of our tongue for which we are not accountable to him.

To him we are equally accountable for the use of our hands and feet, and all the members of our body. These are so many talents which are committed to our trust until the time appointed by the Father. Until then we have the use of all these; but as stewards, not as proprietors; to the end we should "render them, not as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but as instruments of righteousness unto God."

God has intrusted us, thirdly, with a portion of worldly

goods; with food to eat, raiment to put on, and a place where to lay our head: with not only the necessaries, but the conveniences of life. Above all, he has committed to our charge that precious talent which contains all the rest, money: indeed it is unspeakably precious, if we are wise and faithful stewards of it; if we employ every part of it for such purposes as our blessed Lord has commanded us to do.

God has intrusted us, fourthly, with several talents, which do not properly come under any of these heads. Such is bodily strength; such are health, a pleasing person, an agreeable address; such are learning and knowledge, in their various degrees, with all the other advantages of education. Such is the influence which we have over others, whether by their love and esteem of us, or by power; power to do them good or hurt, to help or hinder them in the circumstances of life. Add to these, that invaluable talent of time with which God intrusts us from moment to moment. Add, lastly, that on which all the rest depend, and without which they would all be curses, not blessings; namely, the grace of God, the power of his Holy Spirit, which alone worketh in us all that is acceptable in his sight.

In so many respects are the children of men stewards of the Lord, the possessor of heaven and earth: so large a portion of his goods, of various kinds, hath he committed to their charge. But it is not for ever, nor indeed for any considerable time: we have this trust reposed in us only during the short, uncertain space that we sojourn here below; only so long as we remain on earth, as this fleeting breath is in our nostrils. The hour is swiftly approaching, it is just at hand, when we "can be no longer stewards." The moment the body "returns to the dust as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it," we bear that character no more; the time of our stewardship is at an end. Part of

those goods wherewith we were before intrusted are now come to an end; at least they are so with regard to *us;* nor are we longer intrusted with them: and that part which remains can no longer be employed or improved as it was before.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 449–451.

SECTION VII.

Conscience, and its several Kinds.

What is conscience, in the Christian sense? It is that faculty of the soul which, by the assistance of the grace of God, sees, at one and the same time, (1.) Our own tempers and lives; the real nature and quality of our thoughts, words, and actions: (2.) The rule whereby we are to be directed: and, (3.) The agreement or disagreement therewith. To express this a little more largely:—Conscience implies, first, the faculty a man has of knowing himself; of discerning, both in general and in particular, his own tempers, thoughts, words, and actions. But this it is not possible for him to do without the assistance of the Spirit of God. Otherwise self-love, and indeed every other irregular passion, would disguise and wholly conceal him from himself. It implies, secondly, a knowledge of the rule whereby he is to be directed in every particular; which is no other than the written word of God. Conscience implies, thirdly, a knowledge that all his thoughts, and words, and actions are conformable to that rule. In all these offices of conscience the "unction of the Holy One" is indispensably needful. Without this, neither could we clearly discern our lives or tempers; nor could we judge of the rule whereby we are to walk, or of our conformity or disconformity to it.

This is properly the account of a good conscience; which may be in other terms expressed thus: A divine consciousness of walking in all things according to the

written word of God. It seems, indeed, that there can be no conscience which has not a regard to God. If you say, "Yes, there certainly may be a consciousness of having done right or wrong, without any reference to him;" I answer, this I cannot grant: I doubt whether the very words "right and wrong," according to the Christian system, do not imply, in the very idea of them, agreement and disagreement to the will and word of God. If so, there is no such thing as conscience in a Christian, if we leave God out of the question.

In order to the very existence of a good conscience, as well as the continuance of it, the continued influence of the Spirit of God is absolutely needful. Accordingly the apostle John declares to the believers of all ages, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things:" all things that are needful to your having "a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man." So he adds, "Ye have no need that any one should teach you," otherwise, "than as that anointing teacheth you." That anointing clearly teacheth us these three things: first, the true meaning of God's word: secondly, our own tempers and lives; bringing all our thoughts, words, and actions, to remembrance: and thirdly, the agreement of all with the commandments of God.

Proceed we now to consider, in the second place, the several sorts of conscience. A good conscience has been spoken of already. This St. Paul expresses various ways. In one place he simply terms it a "good conscience toward God;" in another, "a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man." But he speaks still more largely in the text: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity," with a single eye, "and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world." Meantime he observes, that this was done, "not by fleshly wisdom," commonly called prudence; (this never

did, nor ever can produce such an effect;) "but by the grace of God:" which alone is sufficient to work this in any child of man.

Nearly allied to this (if it be not the same, placed in another view, or a particular branch of it) is a tender conscience. One of a tender conscience is exact in observing any deviation from the word of God, whether in thought, or word, or work; and immediately feels remorse and self-condemnation for it. And the constant cry of his soul is,

> "O that my tender soul may fly
> The first abhorr'd approach of ill;
> Quick as the apple of an eye,
> The slightest touch of sin to feel!"

But sometimes this excellent quality, tenderness of conscience, is carried to an extreme. We find some who fear where no fear is, who are continually condemning themselves without cause; imagining some things to be sinful which the Scripture nowhere condemns, and supposing other things to be their duty which the Scripture nowhere enjoins. This is properly termed a scrupulous conscience, and is a sore evil. It is highly expedient to yield to it as little as possible; rather it is a matter of earnest prayer that you may be delivered from this sore evil, and may recover a sound mind: to which nothing would contribute more than the converse of a pious and judicious friend.

But the extreme which is opposite to this is far more dangerous. A hardened conscience is a thousand times more dangerous than a scrupulous one, that can violate a plain command of God without any self-condemnation; either doing what he has expressly forbidden, or neglecting what he has expressly commanded; and yet without any remorse; yea, perhaps glorying in this very hardness of heart! Many instances of this deplorable stupidity we meet with at this day; and even among people who sup-

pose themselves to have no small share of religion. A person is doing something which the Scripture clearly forbids. You ask, How do you dare to do this? and are answered with perfect unconcern, "O, my heart does not condemn me." I reply, "So much the worse. I would to God it did! You would then be in a safer state than you are now. It is a dreadful thing to be condemned by the word of God, and yet not to be condemned by your own heart!" If we can break the least of the known commandments of God without any self-condemnation, it is plain that the god of this world hath hardened our hearts. If we do not soon recover from this, we shall be "past feeling," and our consciences (as St. Paul speaks) will be "seared as with a hot iron."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 379–381.

SECTION VIII.

His Knowledge limited.

THE desire of knowledge is a universal principle in man, fixed in his inmost nature. It is not variable, but constant in every rational creature, unless while it is suspended by some stronger desire. And it is insatiable: "the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing;" neither the mind with any degree of knowledge which can be conveyed into it. And it is planted in every human soul for excellent purposes. It is intended to hinder our taking up our rest in any thing here below; to raise our thoughts to higher and higher objects, more and more worthy our consideration, till we ascend to the Source of all knowledge and all excellence, the all-wise, and all-gracious Creator.

But although our desire of knowledge has no bounds, yet our knowledge itself has. It is, indeed, confined within very narrow bounds; abundantly narrower than

common people imagine, or men of learning are willing to acknowledge: a strong intimation (since the great Creator doeth nothing in vain) that there will be some future state of being wherein that now insatiable desire will be satisfied, and there will be no longer so immense a distance between the appetite and the object of it.

The present knowledge of man is exactly adapted to his present wants. It is sufficient to warn us of, and to preserve us from, most of the evils to which we are now exposed; and to procure us whatever is necessary for us in this our infant state of existence. We know enough of the nature and sensible qualities of the things that are round about us, so far as they are subservient to the health and strength of our bodies; we know how to procure and prepare our food; we know what raiment is fit to cover us; we know how to build our houses, and to furnish them with all necessaries and conveniences; we know just as much as is conducive to our living comfortably in this world: but of innumerable things above, below, and around about us, we know little more than that they exist. And in this our deep ignorance is seen the goodness, as well as the wisdom of God, in cutting short his knowledge on every side, on purpose to "hide pride from man."

Therefore it is that by the very constitution of their nature the wisest of men "know [but] in part." And how amazingly small a part do they know, either of the Creator, or of his works! This is a very needful, but a very unpleasing theme; for "vain man would be wise." Let us reflect upon it for a while. And may the God of wisdom and love open our eyes to discern our own ignorance. *Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 116, 117.

SECTION IX.

Is ignorant of the Particulars of a future State.

I AM now an immortal spirit, strangely connected with a little portion of earth: but this is only for a while. In a short time I am to quit this tenement of clay, and to remove into another state,

> "Which the living know not,
> And the dead cannot—or they may not tell!"

What kind of existence shall I then enter upon, when my spirit has launched out of the body? How shall I feel myself, perceive my own being? How shall I discern the things that are around about me, either material or spiritual objects? When my eyes no longer transmit the rays of light, how will the naked spirit *see?* When the organs of hearing are mouldered into dust, in what manner shall I hear? When the brain is of no farther use, what means of thinking shall I have? When my whole body is dissolved into senseless earth, what means shall I have of gaining knowledge?

How strange, how incomprehensible are the means whereby I shall then take knowledge even of the material world! Will things appear then as they do now? Of the same size, shape, and colour? Or will they be altered in any, or all these respects? How will the sun, moon, and stars, appear? The sublunary heavens? The planetary heavens? The region of the fixed stars? How the fields of ether, which we may conceive to be millions of miles beyond them? Of all this we know nothing yet; and indeed we need to know nothing.

What then can we know of those innumerable objects which properly belong to the invisible world; which mortal "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it

entered into our hearts to conceive?" What a scene will then be opened, when the regions of hades are then displayed without a covering! Our English translators seem to have been much at a loss for a word to render this. Indeed two hundred years ago it was tolerably expressed by the word hell, which then signified much the same with the word hades, namely, the invisible world. Accordingly, by Christ descending into hell they meant, his body remained in the grave, his soul remained in hades, (which is the receptacle of separate spirits,) from death to the resurrection. Here we cannot doubt but the spirits of the righteous are inexpressibly happy. They are, as St. Paul expresses it, "with the Lord:" favoured with so intimate a communion with him as "is far better" than whatever the chief of the apostles experienced while in this world. On the other hand, we learn from our Lord's own account of Dives and Lazarus, that the rich man, from the moment he left the world, entered into a state of torment. And "there is a great gulf fixed" in hades, between the place of the holy, and that of unholy spirits, which it is impossible for either the one or the other to pass over. Indeed, a gentleman of great learning, the honourable Mr. Campbell, in his account of the Middle State, published not many years ago, seems to suppose that wicked souls may amend in hades, and then remove to a happier mansion. He has great hopes that "the rich man" mentioned by our Lord, in particular, might be purified by that penal fire, till, in process of time, he might be qualified for a better abode. But who can reconcile this with Abraham's assertion, that none can pass over the "great gulf?"

I cannot therefore but think, that all those who are with the rich man in the unhappy division of hades, will remain there, howling and blaspheming, cursing and looking upward, till they are cast into "the everlasting fire prepared

for the devil and his angels." And, on the other hand, can we reasonably doubt but that those who are now in paradise, in Abraham's bosom, all those holy souls who have been discharged from the body, from the beginning of the world unto this day, will be continually ripening for heaven; will be perpetually holier and happier, till they are received into the "kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world?"

But who can inform us in what part of the universe hades is situated—this abode of both happy and unhappy spirits till they are reunited to their bodies? It has not pleased God to reveal any thing concerning it in the Holy Scripture; and, consequently, it is not possible for us to form any judgment or even conjecture about it. Neither are we informed how either one or the other are employed during the time of their abode there. Yet may we, not improbably, suppose, that the Governor of the world may sometimes permit wicked souls "to do his gloomy errands in the deep?" Or, perhaps, in conjunction with evil angels, to inflict vengeance on wicked men? Or will many of them be shut up in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day? In the mean time may we not probably suppose, that the spirits of the just, though generally lodged in paradise, yet may sometimes, in conjunction with the holy angels, minister to the heirs of salvation? May they not

> "Sometimes, on errands of love,
> Revisit their brethren below?"

It is a pleasing thought, that some of these human spirits, attending us with, or in the room of, angels, are of the number of those that were dear to us while they were in the body. So that there is no absurdity in the question,

> "Have ye your own flesh forgot,
> By a common ransom bought?

Can death's interposing tide
Spirits one in Christ divide?"

But be this as it may, it is certain, human spirits swiftly increase in knowledge, in holiness, and in happiness: conversing with all the wise and holy souls that lived in all ages and nations from the beginning of the world; with angels and archangels, to whom the children of men are no more than infants; and, above all, with the eternal Son of God, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." And let it be especially considered, whatever they learn they will retain for ever. For they forget nothing. To forget is only incident to spirits that are clothed with flesh and blood.

But how will this material universe appear to a disimbodied spirit? Who can tell whether any of these objects that surround us will appear the same as they do now? And if we know so little of these, what can we know concerning objects of a quite different nature? Concerning the spiritual world? It seems it will not be possible for us to discern them at all till we are furnished with senses of a different nature, which are not yet opened in our souls. These may enable us both to penetrate the inmost substance of things, whereof we now discern only the surface, and to discern innumerable things, of the very existence whereof we have not now the least perception. What astonishing scenes will then discover to our newly opening senses! Probably fields of ether, not only ten fold, but ten thousand fold "the length of this terrene." And with what variety of furniture, animate or inanimate! How many orders of beings, not discovered by organs of flesh and blood! Perhaps thrones, dominions, virtues, princedoms, powers! Whether of those that have retained their first habitations and primeval strength, or those that, rebelling against their Creator, have been cast out of heaven? And shall we not then, as far as angels ken,

survey the bounds of creation, and see every place where the Almighty

> "Stopp'd his rapid wheels, and said,
> This be thy just circumference, O world?"

Yea, shall we not be able to move, quick as thought, through the wide realms of uncreated light? Above all, the moment we step into eternity, shall we not feel ourselves swallowed up of Him who is in this and every place,—who filleth heaven and earth? It is only the veil of flesh and blood which now hinders us from perceiving that the great Creator cannot but fill the whole immensity of space. He is every moment above us, beneath us, and on every side. Indeed, in this dark abode, this land of shadows, this region of sin and death, the thick cloud which is interposed between conceals him from our sight. But the veil will disappear, and he will appear, in unclouded majesty, "God over all, blessed for ever."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 466–468.

How exceeding little do we now know concerning the invisible world! And we should have known still less of it had it not pleased the Author of both worlds to give us more than natural light, to give us "his word to be a lantern to our feet, and a light in all our paths." And holy men of old, being assisted by his Spirit, have discovered many particulars of which otherwise we should have had no conception.

And without revelation, how little certainty of invisible things did the wisest of men obtain! The small glimmerings of light which they had were merely conjectural. At best they were only a faint dim twilight, delivered from uncertain tradition; and so obscured by heathen fables that it was but one degree better than utter darkness.

How uncertain the best of these conjectures was may easily be gathered from their own accounts. The most

finished of all these accounts is that of the great Roman poet. Where observe how warily he begins with that apologetic preface, *Sit mihi fas audita loqui?* "May I be allowed to tell what I have heard?" And in the conclusion, lest any one should imagine he believed any of these accounts, he sends the relater of them out of hades, by the *ivory gate*, through which he had just informed us that only dreams and shadows pass—a very plain intimation that all which had gone before is to be looked upon as a dream!

How little regard they had for all these conjectures, with regard to the invisible world, clearly appears from the words of his brother poet, who affirms, without any scruple,

> "Esse aliquos manes et subterranea regna
> Nec fieri credunt:"

"That there are ghosts or realms below, not even a man of them now believes."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 471.

SECTION X.

His Folly in choosing Sin.

In what condition are those immortal spirits who have made choice of a miserable eternity? I say, made choice; for it impossible this should be the lot of any creature but by his own act and deed. The day is coming when every soul will be constrained to acknowledge, in the sight of men and angels,

> "No dire decree of Thine did seal
> Or fix th' unalterable doom;
> Consign my unborn soul to hell,
> Or damn me from my mother's womb."

In what condition will such a spirit be after the sentence is executed, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, pre-

pared for the devil and his angels?" Suppose him to be just now plunged into "the lake of fire burning with brimstone," where "they have no rest day or night, but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." Why, if we were only to be chained down one day, yea, one hour, in a lake of fire, how amazingly long would one day or one hour appear! I know not if it would not seem as a thousand years. But (astonishing thought!) after thousands of thousands, he has but just tasted of his bitter cup! After millions of millions, it will be no nearer the end than it was the moment it began!

What then is he, how foolish, how mad, in how unutterable a degree of distraction, who, seeming to have the understanding of a man, deliberately prefers temporal things to eternal? who (allowing that absurd, impossible supposition, that wickedness is happiness—a supposition utterly contrary to all reason, as well as to matter of fact) prefers the happiness of a year, say a thousand years, to the happiness of eternity, in comparison of which a thousand ages are infinitely less than a year, a day, a moment? Especially when we take this into the consideration, (which, indeed, should never be forgotten,) that the refusing a happy eternity implies the choosing of a miserable eternity: for there is not, cannot be, any medium between everlasting joy and everlasting pain. It is a vain thought which some have entertained, that death will put an end to the soul as well as to the body. It will put an end to neither the one nor the other: it will only alter the manner of their existence. But when the body "returns to the dust as it was, the spirit will return to God that gave it." Therefore, at the moment of death, it must be unspeakably happy, or unspeakably miserable: and that misery will never end.

> "*Never!* Where sinks the soul at that dread sound?
> Into a gulf how dark, and how profound!"

How often would he who had made the wretched choice wish for the death both of his soul and body! It is not impossible that he might pray in some such manner as Dr. Young supposes:—

> "When I have writhed ten thousand years in fire;
> Ten thousand thousand, let me then expire!"

Yet this unspeakable folly, this unutterable madness, of preferring present things to eternal, is the disease of every man born into the world, while in his natural state. For such is the constitution of our nature, that as the eye sees only such a portion of space at once, so the mind sees only such a portion of time at once. And as all the space that lies beyond this is invisible to the eye, so all the time which lies beyond that compass is invisible to the mind. So that we do not perceive either the space or the time which is at a distance from us. The eye sees distinctly the space that is near it, with the objects which it contains: in like manner the mind sees distinctly those objects which are within such a distance of time. The eye does not see the beauties of China; they are at too great a distance: there is too great a space between us and them; therefore we are not affected by them. They are as nothing to us: it is just the same to us as if they had no being. For the same reason the mind does not see either the beauties or the terrors of eternity. We are not at all affected by them, because they are so distant from us. On this account it is that they appear to us nothing: just as if they had no existence. Meantime we are wholly taken up with things present, whether in time or space; and things appear less and less, as they are more and more distant from us, either in one respect or the other. And so it must be; such is the constitution of our nature; till nature is changed by almighty grace. But this is no manner of excuse for those who continue in their natural

blindness to futurity; because a remedy for it is provided, which is found by all that seek it: yea, it is freely given to all that sincerely ask it.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 16–18.

SECTION XI.

Subject to Death.

God has indeed provided for the execution of his own decree, in the very principles of our nature. It is well known the human body, when it comes into the world, consists of innumerable membranes exquisitely thin, that are filled with circulating fluids, to which the solid parts bear a very small proportion. Into the tubes, composed of these membranes, nourishment must be continually infused; otherwise life cannot continue, but will come to an end almost as soon as it is begun. And suppose this nourishment to be liquid, which, as it flows through those fine canals, continually enlarges them in all their dimensions; yet it contains innumerable solid particles, which continually adhere to the inner surface of the vessels through which they flow; so that in the same proportion as any vessel is enlarged, it is stiffened also. Thus the body grows firmer as it grows larger, from infancy to manhood. In twenty, five and twenty, or thirty years, it attains its full measure of firmness. Every part of the body is then stiffened to its full degree; as much earth adhering to all the vessels as gives the solidity they severally need to the nerves, arteries, veins, muscles, in order to exercise their functions in the most perfect manner. For twenty, or, it may be, thirty years following, although more and more particles of earth continually adhere to the inner surface of every vessel in the body, yet the stiffness caused thereby is hardly observable, and occasions little inconvenience. But after sixty years, (more or less, according to the natural constitution, and a thousand accidental cir-

cumstances,) the change is easily perceived even at the surface of the body. Wrinkles show the proportion of the fluids to be lessened, as does also the dryness of the skin, through a diminution of the blood and juices, which before moistened and kept it smooth and soft. The extremities of the body grow cold, not only as they are remote from the centre of motion, but as the smaller vessels are filled up, and can no longer admit the circulating fluid. As age increases, fewer and fewer of the vessels are pervious, and capable of transmitting the vital stream; except the larger ones, most of which are lodged within the trunk of the body. In extreme old age, the arteries themselves, the grand instruments of circulation, by the continual apposition of earth, become hard, and, as it were, bony; till, having lost the power of contracting themselves, they can no longer propel the blood, even through the largest channels; in consequence of which death naturally ensues. Thus are the seeds of death sown in our very nature! Thus from the very hour when we first appear on the stage of life we are travelling toward death: we are preparing, whether we will or no, to return to the dust from whence we came.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 35.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF REPENTANCE.

SECTION I.

Of its Nature.

"REPENT:" that is, Know yourselves. This is the first repentance, previous to faith; even conviction, or self-knowledge. Awake, then, thou that sleepest. Know thy-

self to be a sinner, and what manner of sinner thou art. Know that corruption of thy inmost nature whereby thou art very far gone from original righteousness, whereby "the flesh lusteth," always "contrary to the Spirit," through that "carnal mind" which "is enmity against God," which "is not subject to the law of God neither indeed, can be." Know that thou art corrupted in every power, in every faculty of thy soul; that thou art totally corrupted in every one of these, all the foundations being out of course. The eyes of thy understanding are darkened, so that they cannot discern God, or the things of God. The clouds of ignorance and error rest upon thee, and cover thee with the shadow of death. Thou knowest nothing yet as thou oughtest to know, neither God, nor the world, nor thyself. Thy will is no longer the will of God, but is utterly perverse and distorted; averse from all good, from all which God loves, and prone to all evil, to every abomination which God hateth. Thy affections are alienated from God, and scattered abroad over all the earth. All thy passions, both thy desires and aversions, thy joys and sorrows, thy hopes and fears, are out of frame, are either undue in their degree, or placed on undue objects. So that there is no soundness in thy soul; but "from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot," (to use the strong expression of the prophet,) there are only "wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores."

Such is the inbred corruption of thy heart, of thy very inmost nature. And what manner of branches canst thou expect to grow from such an evil root? Hence springs unbelief: ever departing from the living God; saying, "Who is the Lord, that I should serve him? Tush! Thou, God, carest not for it: hence independence; affecting to be like the Most High: hence pride in all its forms; teaching thee to say, "I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing." From this evil fountain flow

forth the bitter streams of vanity, thirst of praise, ambition, covetousness, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. From this arise anger, hatred, malice, revenge, envy, jealousy, evil surmisings: from this, all the foolish and hurtful lusts that now "pierce thee through with many sorrows," and, if not timely prevented, will at length drown thy soul in everlasting perdition.

And what fruits can grow on such branches as these? Only such as are bitter and evil continually. Of pride cometh contention, vain boasting, seeking and receiving praise of men, and so robbing God of that glory which he cannot give unto another: of the lust of the flesh come gluttony or drunkenness, luxury or sensuality, fornication, uncleanness; variously defiling that body which was designed for a temple of the Holy Ghost; of unbelief, every evil word and work. But the time would fail, shouldest thou reckon up all; all the idle words thou hast spoken, provoking the Most High, grieving the Holy One of Israel; all the evil works thou hast done, either wholly evil in themselves, or at least not done to the glory of God. For thy actual sins are more than thou art able to express, more than the hairs of thy head. Who can number the sands of the sea, or the drops of rain, or thy iniquities?

And knowest thou not that "the wages of sin is death?" death not only temporal, but eternal. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die:" for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. It shall die the second death. This is the sentence, to "be punished" with never-ending death, "with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Knowest thou not that every sinner, ενοχος εςι τῃ γεεννῃ τȣ πυρος, not properly *is in danger of hell-fire;* that expression is far too weak; but rather, *is under the sentence of hell-fire;* doomed already, just dragging to execution. Thou art guilty of everlasting death. It is the just reward of thy inward and

outward wickedness. It is just that the sentence should now take place. Dost thou see, dost thou feel this? Art thou thoroughly convinced that thou deservest God's wrath, and everlasting damnation? Would God do thee any wrong if he now commanded the earth to open and swallow thee up? If thou wert now to go down quick into the pit, into the fire that never shall be quenched? If God hath given thee truly to repent, thou hast a deep sense that these things are so; and that it is of his mere mercy thou art not consumed, swept away from the face of the earth.

And what wilt thou do to appease the wrath of God, to atone for all thy sins, and to escape the punishment thou hast so justly deserved? Alas! thou canst do nothing: nothing that will in any wise make amends to God for one evil work, or word, or thought. If thou couldest now do all things well, if from this very hour, till thy soul should return to God, thou couldest perform perfect, uninterrupted obedience, even this would not atone for what is past. The not increasing thy debt would not discharge it. It would still remain as great as ever. Yea, the present and future obedience of all the men upon earth, and all the angels in heaven, would never make satisfaction to the justice of God for one single sin. How vain, then, was the thought of atoning for thy own sins by any thing thou couldest do! It costeth far more to redeem one soul than all mankind is able to pay. So that, were there no other help for a guilty sinner, without doubt he must have perished everlastingly.

But suppose perfect obedience, for the time to come, could atone for the sins that are past, this would profit thee nothing; for thou art not able to perform it; no, not in any one point. Begin now: make the trial. Shake off that outward sin that so easily besetteth thee. Thou canst not. How then wilt thou change thy life from all

evil to all good? Indeed it is impossible to be done, unless first thy heart be changed. For, so long as the tree remains evil, it cannot bring forth good fruit. But art thou able to change thy own heart from all sin to all holiness? to quicken a soul that is dead in sin; dead to God, and alive only to the world? No more than thou art able to quicken a dead body, to raise to life him that lieth in the grave. Yea, thou art not able to quicken thy soul in any degree, no more than to give any degree of life to the dead body. Thou canst do nothing, more or less, in this matter; thou art utterly without strength. To be deeply sensible of this, how helpless thou art, as well as how guilty and how sinful, this is that "repentance not to be repented of," which is the forerunner of the kingdom of God.

If to this lively conviction of thy inward and outward sins, of thy utter guiltiness and helplessness, there be added suitable affections,—sorrow of heart for having despised thy own mercies; remorse and self-condemnation, having thy mouth stopped; shame to life up thine eyes to heaven; fear of the wrath of God abiding on thee, of his curse hanging over thy head, and of the fiery indignation ready to devour those who forget God, and obey not our Lord Jesus Christ; earnest desire to escape from that indignation, to cease from evil, and learn to do well; then I say unto thee, in the name of the Lord, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." One step more, and thou shalt enter in. Thou dost *repent*. Now "*believe the gospel*."—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 64–66.

SECTION II.

Its Author.

It is certain that no human spirit, while it is in the body, can *persuade* another *to repent;* can work in him an entire change, both of heart and life: a change from uni-

versal wickedness to universal holiness. And suppose that spirit discharged from the body, it is no more able to do this than it was before: no power less than that which created it at first can create any soul anew. No angel, much less any human spirit, whether in the body or out of the body, can bring one soul "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." It might very possibly fright him to death, or to the belief of any speculative truth; but it could not fright him into spiritual life. God alone can raise those that are "dead in trespasses and sins."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 421.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCERNING FAITH.

SECTION I.

Of its Nature.

FAITH in general is defined by the apostle πραγματων ελεγχος ου βλεπομενον: *an evidence*, a divine *evidence and conviction* [the word means both] *of things not seen;* not visible, not perceivable, either by sight, or by any other of the external senses. It implies both a supernatural *evidence* of God, and of the things of God; a kind of spiritual *light* exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural *sight* or perception thereof. Accordingly the Scripture speaks of God's giving sometimes light, sometimes a power of discerning it. So St. Paul, "God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And elsewhere the same apostle

speaks of "the eyes of [our] understanding being opened." By this twofold operation of the Holy Spirit, having the eyes of our soul both *opened* and *enlightened*, we see the things which the natural "eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard." We have a prospect of the invisible things of God; we see the *spiritual world*, which is all around about us, and yet no more discerned by our natural faculties than if it had no being: and we see the *eternal world*, piercing through the veil which hangs between time and eternity. Clouds and darkness then rest upon it no more, but we already see the glory which shall be revealed.

Taking the word in a more particular sense, faith is a divine *evidence* and *conviction* not only that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," but also that Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*. It is by this faith (whether we term it the *essence*, or rather a *property* thereof) that we *receive Christ;* that we receive him in all his offices, as our prophet, priest, and king. It is by this that he is "made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

"But is this the *faith of assurance*, or *faith of adherence?*" The Scripture mentions no such distinction. The apostle says, "There is one faith, and one hope of our calling;" one Christian, saving faith; "as there is one Lord," in whom we believe, and "one God and Father of us all." And it is certain this faith necessarily implies an *assurance* (which is here only another word for *evidence*, it being hard to tell the difference between them) that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. For "he that believeth," with the true living faith, "hath the witness in himself:" "The Spirit witnesseth with his spirit that he is a child of God." "Because he is a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father!" giving him an assurance that he is so, and a childlike confidence in him. But let it be observed, that in the very

nature of the thing, the assurance goes before the confidence. For a man cannot have a childlike confidence in God till he knows he is a child of God. Therefore confidence, trust, reliance, adherence, or whatever else it be called, is not the first, as some have supposed, but the second branch or act of faith.

It is by this faith we are saved, justified, and sanctified; taking that word in its highest sense.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 386, 387.

What faith is it then through which we are saved? It may be answered, first, In general it is a faith in Christ: Christ, and God through Christ, are the proper objects of it. Herein, therefore, it is sufficiently, absolutely distinguished from the faith either of ancient or modern heathens. And from the faith of a devil it is fully distinguished by this—it is not barely a speculative, rational thing, a cold, lifeless assent, a train of ideas in the head; but also a disposition of the heart. For thus saith the Scripture, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." And, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

It acknowledges his death as the only sufficient means of redeeming man from death eternal, and his resurrection as the restoration of us all to life and immortality; inasmuch as he "was delivered for our sins, and rose again for our justification." Christian faith is, then, not only an assent to the whole gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ; a trust in the merits of his life, death, and resurrection; a recumbency upon him as our atonement and our life, *as given for us*, and *living in us*. It is a sure confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ *his* sins are forgiven, and *he* reconciled to the favour of God; and, in consequence hereof, a closing with him, and cleaving to him, as our

"wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," or, in one word, our salvation.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 14, 15.

Faith, in general, is a divine, supernatural ελεγχος, *evidence* or *conviction*, "of things not seen," not discoverable by our bodily senses, as being either past, future, or spiritual. Justifying faith implies not only a divine evidence or conviction that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," but a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for *my* sins, that he loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*. And at what time soever a sinner thus believes, be it in early childhood, in the strength of his years, or when he is old and hoary-haired, God justifieth that ungodly one: God, for the sake of his Son, pardoneth and absolveth him who had in him, till then, no good thing. Repentance, indeed, God had given him before; but that repentance was neither more nor less than a deep sense of the want of all good, and the presence of all evil. And whatever good he hath or doth from that hour when he first believes in God through Christ, faith does not *find*, but *bring*. This is the fruit of faith. First the tree is good, and then the fruit is good also.

I cannot describe the nature of this faith better than in the words of our own church: "The only instrument of salvation (whereof justification is one branch) is faith: that is, a sure trust and confidence that God both hath and will forgive our sins; that he hath accepted us again into his favour, for the merits of Christ's death and passion. But here we must take heed that we do not halt with God through an inconstant, wavering faith. Peter, coming to Christ upon the water, because he fainted in faith, was in danger of drowning. So we, if we begin to waver or doubt, it is to be feared that we shall sink, as Peter did, not into the water, but into the bottomless pit of hell-fire." *Second Sermon on the Passion.*

"Therefore have a sure and constant faith, not only that the death of Christ is available for all the world, but that he hath made a full and sufficient sacrifice for *thee*, a perfect cleansing of *thy* sins, so that thou mayest say, with the apostle, he loved *thee*, and gave himself for *thee*. For this is to make Christ *thine own*, and to apply his merits unto *thyself*."—*Sermon on the Sacrament, first part.*—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 50.

The true, living, Christian faith, which whosoever hath is born of God, is not only an assent, an act of the understanding, but a disposition which God hath wrought in his heart: "a sure trust and confidence in God, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God." This implies, that a man first renounces himself; that, in order to be "found in Christ," to be accepted through him, he totally rejects all "confidence in the flesh;" that, "having nothing to pay," having no trust in his own works, or righteousness of any kind, he comes to God as a lost, miserable, self-destroyed, self-condemned, undone, helpless sinner; as one whose mouth is utterly stopped, and who is altogether "guilty before God." Such a sense of sin (commonly called despair, by those who speak evil of the things they know not) together with a full conviction, such as no words can express, that of Christ only cometh our salvation, and an earnest desire of that salvation must precede a living faith, a trust in Him who for us paid our ransom by his death, and for us fulfilled the law in his life. This faith then, whereby we are born of God, is "not only a belief of all the articles of our faith, but also a true confidence of the mercy of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 155.

Now faith (supposing the Scripture to be of God) is πραγματων ελεγχος ε βλεπομενων, *the demonstrative evidence of things unseen, the supernatural evidence of things invisible*, not perceivable by eyes of flesh, or by any of our natural

senses or faculties. Faith is that divine evidence whereby the spiritual man discerneth God and the things of God. It is with regard to the spiritual world what sense is with regard to the natural. It is the spiritual sensation of every soul that is born of God.

Faith, according to the Scriptural account, is the eye of the new-born soul. Hereby every true believer in God "seeth Him who is invisible." Hereby (in a more particular manner, since life and immortality have been brought to light by the gospel) he "seeth the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" and "beholdeth what manner of love it is which the Father hath bestowed upon us that we (who are born of the Spirit) should be called the sons of God."

It is the ear of the soul, whereby a sinner "hears the voice of the Son of God and lives;" even that voice which alone wakes the dead: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

It is (if I may be allowed the expression) the palate of the soul: for hereby a believer "tastes the good word, and the powers of the world to come;" and hereby he both tastes and sees that "God is gracious, yea, and merciful to him a sinner."

It is the feeling of the soul, whereby a believer perceives, through "the power of the Highest overshadowing him," both the existence and the presence of Him in whom "he lives, moves, and has his being;" and indeed the whole invisible world, the entire system of things eternal. And hereby, in particular, he feels "the love of God shed abroad in his heart."

"By this faith we are saved" from all uneasiness of mind, from the anguish of a wounded spirit, from discontent, from fear and sorrow of heart, and from that inexpressible listlessness and weariness, both of the world and of ourselves, which we had so helplessly laboured under for many years; especially when we were out of the

hurry of the world, and sunk into calm reflection. In this we find that love of God and of all mankind which we had elsewhere sought in vain. This, we know and feel, and therefore cannot but declare, saves every one that partakes of it both from sin and misery, from every unhappy and every unholy temper.

> "Soft peace she brings wherever she arrives,
> She builds our quiet as she forms our lives;
> Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,
> And opens in each breast a little heaven."

If you ask, "Why then have not all men this faith? All at least who conceive it to be so happy a thing? Why do they not believe immediately?"

We answer, (on the Scripture hypothesis,) "It is the gift of God." No man is able to work it in himself. It is the work of Omnipotence. It requires no less power thus to quicken a dead soul than to raise a body that lies in the grave. It is a new creation, and none can create a soul anew but He who at first created the heavens and the earth.

May not your own experience teach you this? Can you give yourself this faith? Is it now in your power to see, or hear, or taste, or feel God? Have you already, or can you raise in yourself, any perception of God, or of an invisible world? I suppose you do not deny that there is an invisible world: you will not charge it in poor old Hesiod to Christian prejudice of education when he says in those well known words,

> "Millions of unseen creatures walk the earth
> Unseen, whether we wake or if we sleep."

Now is there any power in your soul whereby you discern either these, or Him that created them? Or can all your wisdom and strength open an intercourse between yourself and the world of spirits? Is it in your power to

burst the veil that is on your heart, and let in the light of eternity? You know it is not. You not only do not, but cannot (by your own strength) thus believe. The more you labour so to do, the more you will be convinced "it is the gift of God."

It is the *free gift* of God, which he bestows not on those who are *worthy* of his favour, not on such as are *previously holy*, and so *fit* to be crowned with all the blessings of his goodness: but on the ungodly and unholy: on those who till that hour were *fit* only for everlasting destruction: those in whom was no good thing, and whose only plea was, "God be merciful to me a sinner." No merit, no goodness in man precedes the forgiving love of God. His pardoning mercy supposes nothing in us but a sense of mere sin and misery: and to all who see and feel, and own their wants, and their utter inability to remove them, God freely gives faith, for the sake of Him "in whom he is always well pleased."—*Works*, vol. v, pp. 6, 7.

SECTION II.

Its several Kinds.

The lowest sort of faith, if it be any faith at all, is that of a materialist: a man who, like the late Lord Kaimes, believes there is nothing but matter in the universe. I say, if it be any faith at all; for, properly speaking, it is not. It is not "an evidence or conviction of God," for they do not believe there is any: neither is it "a conviction of things not seen;" for they deny the existence of such. Or if, for decency's sake, they allow there is a God, yet they suppose even him to be material. For one of their maxims is, "*Jupiter est quodcunque vides.*" Whatever you see, is God." *Whatever you see!* A visible, tangible god! Excellent divinity! Exquisite nonsense!

The second sort of faith, if you allow a materialist to

have any, is the faith of a deist. I mean, one who believes there is a God, distinct from matter; but does not believe the Bible. Of these we may observe two sorts: one sort are mere beasts in human shape, wholly under the power of the basest passions, and having "a downright appetite to mix with mud." Other deists are, in most respects, rational creatures, though unhappily prejudiced against Christianity. Most of these believe the being and attributes of God: they believe that God made and governs the world; and that the soul does not die with the body, but will remain for ever in a state of happiness or misery.

The next sort of faith is the faith of heathens, with which I join that of Mohammedans. I cannot but prefer this before the faith of the deists: because, though it embraces nearly the same objects, yet they are rather to be pitied than blamed for the narrowness of their faith. And their not believing the whole truth is not owing to want of sincerity, but merely to want of light. When one asked Chicali, an old Indian chief, "Why do not you, red men, know as much as us white men?" he readily answered, "Because you have the Great Word, and we have not."

It cannot be doubted but this plea will avail for millions of modern heathens. Inasmuch as to them little is given, of them little will be required. As to the ancient heathens, millions of them likewise were savages. No more, therefore, will be expected of them than the living up to the light they had. But many of them, especially in the civilized nations, we have great reason to hope, although they lived among heathens, yet were quite of another spirit; being taught of God, by his inward voice, all the essentials of true religion. Yea, and so was that Mohammedan, an Arabian, who, a century or two ago, wrote the life of Hai Ebn Yokdan. The story seems to be feigned; but it contains all the principles of pure religion and undefiled.

But, in general, we may surely place the faith of a Jew

above that of a heathen or Mohammedan. By Jewish faith I mean, the faith of those who lived between the giving of the law and the coming of Christ. These, that is those that were serious and sincere among them, believed all that is written in the Old Testament. In particular they believed that, in the fulness of time, Messiah would appear "to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness."

It is not so easy to pass any judgment concerning the faith of our modern Jews. It is plain "the veil is still upon their hearts," when Moses and the prophets are read. The god of this world still hardens their hearts, and still blinds their eyes, "lest at any time the light of the glorious gospel" should break in upon them. So that we may say of this people, as the Holy Ghost said to their forefathers, "The heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them," Acts xxviii, 27. Yet it is not our part to pass sentence upon them, but to leave them to their own Master.

I need not dwell upon the faith of John the Baptist, any more than the dispensation which he was under; because these, as Mr. Fletcher well describes them, were peculiar to himself. Setting him aside, the faith of the Roman Catholics in general seems to be above that of the ancient Jews. If most of these are volunteers in faith, believing more than God has revealed, it cannot be denied that they believe all which God has revealed as necessary to salvation. In this we rejoice on their behalf: we are glad that none of those new articles which they added at the council of Trent to "the faith once delivered to the saints," does so materially contradict any of the ancient articles as to render them of no effect.

The faith of the Protestants, in general, embraces only those truths as necessary to salvation which are clearly revealed in the oracles of God. Whatever is plainly declared in the Old and New Testament, is the object of their faith. They believe neither more nor less than what is manifestly contained in, and proveable by the Holy Scriptures. The word of God is "a lantern to their feet, and a light in all their paths." They dare not, on any pretence, go from it to the right hand or to the left. The written word is the whole and sole rule of their faith, as well as practice. They believe whatsoever God has declared, and profess to do whatsoever he hath commanded. This is the proper faith of Protestants: by this they will abide, and no other.

Hitherto faith has been considered chiefly as an evidence and conviction of such truths. And this is the sense wherein it is taken at this day in every part of the Christian world. But in the mean time let it be carefully observed (for eternity depends upon it) that neither the faith of a Roman Catholic, nor that of a Protestant, if it contains no more than this, no more than the embracing such and such truths, will avail any more before God than the faith of a Mohammedan or a heathen; yea, of a deist or materialist. For can this "faith save him?" Can it save any man either from sin or from hell? No more than it could save Judas Iscariot: no more than it could save the devil and his angels; all of whom are convinced that every tittle of Holy Scripture is true.

But what is the faith which is properly saving; which brings eternal salvation to all those that keep it to the end? It is such a divine conviction of God, and the things of God, as even, in its infant state, enables every one that possesses it to "fear God and work righteousness." And whosoever in every nation believes thus far, the apostle declares "is accepted of him." He actually is, at that

very moment, in a state of acceptance. But he is at present only a *servant* of God, not properly a *son*. Meantime let it be well observed, that "the wrath of God" no longer "abideth on him."

It is easy to observe, that all the sorts of faith which we can conceive are reducible to one or other of the preceding. But let us covet the best gifts, and follow the most excellent way. There is no reason why you should be satisfied with the faith of a materialist, a heathen, or a deist; nor indeed with that of a servant. I do not know that God requires it at your hands. Indeed, if you have received this, you ought not to cast it away: you ought not in any wise to undervalue it, but to be truly thankful for it. Yet in the mean time beware how you rest here: press on till you receive the Spirit of adoption. Rest not till that Spirit clearly witnesses with your spirit that you are a child of God.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 384–386.

SECTION III.

To be exercised in God.

We cannot serve God unless we *believe* in him. This is the only true foundation of serving him. Therefore the believing in God as "reconciling the world to himself through Christ Jesus," the believing in him as a loving, pardoning God, is the first great branch of his service.

And thus to believe in God implies, to trust in him as our strength, without whom we can do nothing, who every moment endues us with power from on high, without which it is impossible to please him; as our help, our only help in time of trouble, who compasseth us about with songs of deliverance; as our shield, our defender, and the lifter up of our head above all our enemies that are round about us.

It implies, to trust in God as our happiness; as the cen-

tre of spirits; the only rest of our souls; the only good who is adequate to all our capacities, and sufficient to satisfy all the desires he hath given us.

It implies (what is nearly allied to the other) to trust in God as our end; to have an eye to him in all things; to use all things only as means of enjoying him; whereso-ever we are, or whatsoever we do, to see him that is invisible, looking on us well pleased, and to refer all things to him in Christ Jesus.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 269, 270.

SECTION IV.

The Condition of Justification.

By affirming that this faith is the term or condition of justification, I mean, first, that there is no justification without it. "He that believeth not is condemned already;" and so long as he believeth not, that condemnation cannot be removed, but "the wrath of God abideth on him." As "there is no other name given under heaven" than that of Jesus of Nazareth, no other merit whereby a condemned sinner can ever be saved from the guilt of sin; so there is no other way of obtaining a share in his merit than *by faith in his name*. So that as long as we are without this faith we are "strangers to the covenant of promise," we are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and without God in the world." Whatsoever virtues (so called) a man may have,—I speak of those unto whom the gospel is preached; for "what have I to do to judge them that are without?"—whatsoever good works (so accounted) he may do, it profiteth not; he is still a *child of wrath*, still under the curse, till he believes in Jesus.

Faith, therefore, is the *necessary* condition of justification. Yea, and the *only necessary* condition thereof. This is the second point carefully to be observed; that, the

very moment God giveth faith (for *it is the gift of God*) to the "ungodly" that "worketh not," that "faith is counted to him for righteousness." He hath no righteousness at all, antecedent to this, not so much as negative righteousness, or innocence. But "faith is imputed to him for righteousness" the very moment that he believeth. Not that God (as was observed before) thinketh him to be what he is not. But as "he made Christ to be sin for us," that is, treated him as a sinner, punishing him for our sins; so he counteth us righteous from the time we believe in him: that is, he doth not punish us for our sins, yea, treats us as though we were guiltless and righteous.

Surely the difficulty of assenting to the proposition, that faith is the *only condition* of justification, must arise from not understanding it. We mean thereby thus much, that it is the only thing without which no one is justified; the only thing that is immediately, indispensably, absolutely requisite in order to pardon. As on the other hand, though a man should have every thing else without faith, yet he cannot be justified; so on the other, though he be supposed to want every thing else, yet if he has faith, he cannot but be justified. For suppose a sinner of any kind or degree, in a full sense of his total ungodliness, of his utter inability to think, speak, or do good, and his absolute meetness for hell fire; suppose, I say, this sinner, helpless, and hopeless, casts himself wholly on the mercy of God in Christ, (which indeed he cannot do but by the grace of God,) who can doubt but he is forgiven in that moment? Who will affirm that any more is *indispensably required*, before that sinner can be justified?

Now if there ever was one such instance from the beginning of the world, (and have there not been, and are there not, ten thousand times ten thousand?) it plainly follows, that faith is, in the above sense, the sole condition of justification.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 50, 51.

SECTION V.

Its Fruits.

"He cried unto the Lord in his trouble, and God delivered him out of his distress." His eyes are opened in quite another manner than before, even to see a loving, gracious God. While he is calling, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory!" he hears a voice in his inmost soul, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord: I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy." And it is not long before "the Lord descends in the cloud, and proclaims the name of the Lord." Then he sees, but not with eyes of flesh and blood, "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquities, and transgressions, and sin."

Heavenly, healing light, now breaks in upon his soul. He "looks on Him whom he had pierced;" and "God, who out of darkness commanded light to shine, shineth in his heart." He sees the light of the glorious love of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. He hath a divine "evidence of things not seen" by sense, even of "the deep things of God;" more particularly of the love of God, of his pardoning love to him that believes in Jesus. Overpowered with the sight, his whole soul cries out, "My Lord and my God!" For he sees all his iniquities laid on Him who "bare them in his own body on the tree;" he beholds the Lamb of God taking away his sins. How clearly now does he discern that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; making him sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God through

him;" and that he himself is reconciled to God by that blood of the covenant!

Here end both the guilt and power of sin. He can now say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh (even in this mortal body) I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Here end remorse and sorrow of heart, and the anguish of a wounded spirit. "God turneth his heaviness into joy." He made sore, and now his hands bind up. Here ends also that bondage unto fear; for "his heart standeth fast, believing in the Lord." He cannot fear any longer the wrath of God, for he knows it is now turned away from him, and looks upon him no more as an angry judge, but as a loving father. He cannot fear the devil, knowing he has "no power except it be given him from above." He fears not hell; being an heir of the kingdom of heaven: consequently, he has no fear of death; by reason whereof he was, in times past, for so many years, "subject to bondage." Rather, knowing that "if the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, he hath a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; he groaneth earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with that house which is from heaven." He groans to shake off this house of earth, that mortality may be swallowed up of life; knowing that God "hath wrought him for the self-same thing; who hath also given him the earnest of his Spirit."

And "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty:" liberty, not only from guilt and fear, but from sin, from that heaviest of all yokes, that basest of all bondage. His labour is not now in vain. The snare is broken, and he is delivered. He not only strives, but likewise prevails; he not only fights, but conquers also. "Henceforth he doth not serve sin," Rom. vi, 6, &c. "He is dead unto sin,

and alive unto God;" "sin doth not now reign," even "in his mortal body," nor doth he "obey it in the desires thereof." He does not "yield his members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but as instruments of righteousness unto God." For "being now made free from sin, he is become the servant of righteousness."

Thus, "having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God," and having power over all sin, over every evil desire, and temper, and word, and work, he is a living witness of the "glorious liberty of the sons of God:" all of whom, being partakers of like precious faith, bear record with one voice, "We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!"—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 81, 82.

An immediate and constant fruit of this faith whereby we are born of God, a fruit which can in no wise be separated from it, no, not for an hour, is power over sin;—power over outward sin of every kind; over every evil word and work; for wheresoever the blood of Christ is thus applied, it "purgeth the conscience from dead works;" and over inward sin; for it purifieth the heart from every unholy desire and temper. This fruit of faith St. Paul has largely described in the sixth chapter of his epistle to the Romans. "How shall we," saith he, "who [by faith] are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" "Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." "Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign [even] in your mortal body," "but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead." "For sin shall not have dominion over you. God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin,—but being made free,"—the plain meaning is, God be thanked that though ye were, in time past, the servants of sin, yet now "being

free from sin, ye are become the servants of righteousness."

The same invaluable privilege of the sons of God is as strongly asserted by St. John; particularly with regard to the former branch of it, namely, power over outward sin. After he had been crying out, as one astonished at the depth of the riches of the goodness of God, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! Beloved, now are we the sons of God: and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii, 1, &c.; he soon adds, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," ver. 9. But some men will say, "True; whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin *habitually*." *Habitually!* whence is that? I read it not. It is not written in the book. God plainly saith, "He doth not commit sin;" and thou addest, *habitually!* Who art thou that *mendest* the oracles of God? —that "addest to the words of this book?" Beware, I beseech thee, lest God "add to thee all the plagues that are written therein." Especially when the comment thou addest is such as quite swallows up the text: so that by this μεθοδεια πλανης, this artful method of deceiving, the precious promise is utterly lost; by this κυβεια ανθρωπων, this tricking and shuffling of men, the word of God is made of none effect. O beware, thou that thus takest from the words of this book, that, taking away the whole meaning and spirit from them, leavest only what may indeed be termed a dead letter, lest God take away thy part out of the book of life!

Suffer we the apostle to interpret his own words by the whole tenour of his discourse. In the fifth verse of this chapter he had said, "Ye know that he [Christ] was

manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." What is the inference he draws from this? "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him," chap. iii, 5. To his enforcement of this important doctrine he premises a highly necessary caution, "Little children, let no man deceive you," (verse 7;) for many will endeavour so to do; to persuade you that you may be unrighteous, that you may commit sin, and yet be children of God: "he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning." Then follows, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this," adds the apostle, "the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." By this plain mark (the committing or not committing sin) are they distinguished from each other. To the same effect are those words in his fifth chapter, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not: but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not," verse 18. *Sermons*, vol. i. pp. 155, 156.

CHAPTER X.

OF JUSTIFICATION.

SECTION I.

Its Nature.

THE plain Scriptural notion of justification is, pardon, the forgiveness of sins. It is the act of God the Father, whereby, for the sake of the propitiation made by the

blood of his Son, he "showeth forth his righteousness (or mercy) by the remission of the sins that are past." This is the easy, natural account of it, given by St. Paul throughout this whole epistle [to the Romans.] So he explains it himself, more particularly in this and the following chapters, iii, iv. Thus, in the next verse but one to the text, "Blessed are they," saith he, "whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." To him that is justified or forgiven, God "will not impute sin" to his condemnation. He will not condemn him on that account, either in this world, or in that which is to come. His sins, all his past sins, in thought, word, and deed, are covered, are blotted out, shall not be remembered or mentioned against him any more than if they had not been. God will not inflict on that sinner what he deserved to suffer, because the Son of his love hath suffered for him. And from the time we are "accepted through the Beloved," "reconciled to God through his blood," he loves, and blesses, and watches over us for good, even as if we had never sinned.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 47, 48.

Justification is another word for pardon. It is the forgiveness of all our sins; and, what is necessarily implied therein, our acceptance with God. The price whereby this hath been procured for us (commonly termed the meritorious cause of our justification) is the blood and righteousness of Christ; or, to express it a little more clearly, all that Christ hath done and suffered for us, till he "poured out his soul for the transgressors." The immediate effects of justification are, the peace of God, "peace that passeth all understanding," and a "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God," "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 385.

SECTION II.

Christ its meritorious Cause.

In this state we were, even all mankind, when "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end we might not perish, but have everlasting life." In the fulness of time he was made man, another common head of mankind, a second general parent and representative of the whole human race. And as such it was that "he bore our griefs," "the Lord laying upon him the iniquities of us all." Then was he "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." "He made his soul an offering for sin:" he poured out his blood for the transgressors: he "bare our sins in his own body on the tree," that by his stripes we might be healed: and by that one oblation of himself, once offered, he hath redeemed me and all mankind; having thereby "made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

In consideration of this, that the Son of God hath "tasted death for every man," God hath now "reconciled the world to himself, not imputing to them their former trespasses." And thus, "as, by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification." So that, for the sake of his well-beloved Son, of what he hath done and suffered for us, God now vouchsafes, on one only condition, (which himself also enables us to perform,) both to remit the punishment due to our sins, to reinstate us in his favour, and to restore our dead souls to spiritual life, as the earnest of life eternal.

This, therefore, is the general ground of the whole doctrine of justification. By the sin of the first Adam, who was not only the father, but likewise the representa-

tive of us all, we all fell short of the favour of God; we all became children of wrath; or, as the apostle expresses it, "judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Even so, by the sacrifice for sin made by the second Adam, as the representative of us all, God is so far reconciled to all the world, that he hath given them a new covenant; the plain condition whereof being once fulfilled, "there is no more condemnation" for us, but "we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." *Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 45, 46.

CHAPTER XI.

OF REGENERATION.

SECTION I.

Its Nature.

The expression, being born again, was not first used by our Lord in his conversation with Nicodemus: it was well known before that time, and was in common use among the Jews when our Saviour appeared among them. When an adult heathen was convinced that the Jewish religion was of God, and desired to join therein, it was the custom to baptize him first, before he was admitted to circumcision. And when he was baptized he was said to be born again; by which they meant, that he who was before a child of the devil was now adopted into the family of God, and accounted one of his children. This expression therefore, which Nicodemus, "being a teacher in Israel," ought to have understood well, our Lord uses in conversing with him; only in a stronger sense than he was accustomed to. And this might be the reason of his

asking, "How can these things be?" They cannot be literally: a man cannot "enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born;" but they may spiritually: a man may be born from above, born of God, born of the Spirit, in a manner which bears a very near analogy to the natural birth.

Before a child is born into the world he has eyes, but sees not; he has ears, but does not hear. He has a very imperfect use of every other sense. He has no knowledge of any of the things of the world, or any natural understanding. To that manner of existence which he then has we do not even give the name of life. It is then only when a man is born that we say he begins to live. For as soon as he is born he begins to see the light, and the various objects with which he is encompassed. His ears are then opened, and he hears the sounds which successively strike upon them. At the same time all the organs of sense begin to be exercised upon their proper objects. He likewise breathes and lives in a manner wholly different from what he did before. How exactly doth the parallel hold in all these instances! While a man is in a mere natural state, before he is born of God, he has, in a spiritual sense, eyes, and sees not; a thick, impenetrable veil lies upon them: he has ears, but hears not; he is utterly deaf to what he is most of all concerned to hear. His other spiritual senses are all locked up: he is in the same condition as if he had them not. Hence he has no knowledge of God; no intercourse with him; he is not at all acquainted with him. He has no true knowledge of the things of God, either of spiritual or eternal things; therefore, though he is a living man, he is a dead Christian. But as soon as he is born of God, there is a total change in all these particulars. The "eyes of his understanding are opened," (such is the language of the great apostle,) and He, who of old "commanded light to

shine out of darkness," shining on his heart, he sees "the light of the glory of God," his glorious love, "in the face of Jesus Christ." His ears being opened, he is now capable of hearing the inward voice of God saying, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee;" "go, and sin no more." This is the purport of what God speaks to his heart; although, perhaps, not in these very words. He is now ready to hear whatsoever "He that teacheth man knowledge" is pleased from time to time to reveal to him. He "feels in his heart (to use the language of our church) the mighty working of the Spirit of God;" not in a gross, carnal sense, as the men of the world stupidly and wilfully misunderstand the expression; though they have been told, again and again, we mean thereby neither more nor less than this: he feels, is inwardly sensible of the graces which the Spirit of God works in his heart. He feels, he is conscious of, a "peace which passeth all understanding." He many times feels such a joy in God as is "unspeakable and full of glory." He feels "the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him;" and all his spiritual senses are then exercised to discern spiritual good and evil. By the use of these he is daily increasing in the knowledge of God, of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, and of all the things pertaining to his inward kingdom. And now he may be properly said to live: God having quickened him by his Spirit, he is alive to God through Jesus Christ. He lives a life which the world knoweth not of, a "life which is hid with Christ in God." God is continually breathing, as it were, upon the soul; and his soul is breathing unto God. Grace is descending into his heart; and prayer and praise ascending to heaven: and by this intercourse between God and man, this fellowship with the Father and the Son, as by a kind of spiritual respiration, the life of God in the soul is sustained; and the child of God grows up

till he comes to the "full measure of the stature of Christ." *Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 402, 403.

The new birth is not the same with sanctification. This is indeed taken for granted by many; particularly by an eminent writer in his late treatise on "The nature and grounds of Christian regeneration." To waive several other weighty objections which might be made to that tract, this is a palpable one: it all along speaks of regeneration as a progressive work, carried on in the soul by slow degrees, from the time of our first turning to God. This is undeniably true of sanctification; but of regeneration, the new birth, it is not true. This is a part of sanctification, not the whole; it is the gate to it, the entrance into it. When we are born again, then our sanctification, our inward and outward holiness, begins; and thenceforward we are gradually to "grow up in Him who is our head." This expression of the apostle admirably illustrates the difference between one and the other, and farther points out the exact analogy there is between natural and spiritual things. A child is born of a woman in a moment, or at least in a very short time: afterward he gradually and slowly grows, till he attains to the stature of a man. In like manner a child is born of God in a short time, if not in a moment. But it is by slow degrees that he afterward grows up to the measure of the full stature of Christ. The same relation, therefore, which there is between our natural birth and our growth, there is also between our new birth and our sanctification.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 405, 406.

SECTION II.

Its Evidences.

Thus have I plainly laid down those marks of the new birth which I find laid down in Scripture. Thus doth God

himself answer that weighty question, What is it to be born of God? Such, if the appeal be made to the oracles of God, is "every one that is born of the Spirit." This it is, in the judgment of the Spirit of God, to be a son or a child of God. It is so to *believe* in God, through Christ, as "not to commit sin," and to enjoy, at all times and in all places, that "peace of God which passeth all understanding." It is so to *hope* in God, through the Son of his love, as to have not only the "testimony of a good conscience," but also the Spirit of God "bearing witness with your spirits that ye are the children of God;" whence cannot but spring the rejoicing evermore in Him through whom ye "have received the atonement." It is so to *love* God, who hath thus loved you, as you never did love any creature: so that ye are constrained to love all men as yourselves; with a love not only ever burning in your hearts, but flaming out in all your actions and conversation, and making your whole life one "labour of love," one continued obedience to those commands, "Be ye merciful, as God is merciful:" "Be ye holy, as I the Lord am holy;" "Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 160.

CHAPTER XII.

OF SANCTIFICATION, OR CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

SECTION I.

Its Nature.

From the time of our being born again, the gradual work of sanctification takes place. We are enabled "by

the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body," of our evil nature; and as we are more and more dead to sin, we are more and more alive to God. We go on from grace to grace, while we are careful to "abstain from all appearance of evil," and are "zealous of good works," as we have opportunity of doing good to all men; while we walk in all his ordinances blameless, therein worshipping him in spirit and in truth; while we take up our cross, and deny ourselves every pleasure that does not lead us to God.

It is thus that we wait for entire sanctification; for a full salvation from all our sins,—from pride, self-will, anger, unbelief; or, as the apostle expresses it, "go on unto perfection." But what is perfection? The word has various senses: here it means perfect love. It is love excluding sin; love filling the heart, taking up the whole capacity of the soul. It is love "rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, in every thing giving thanks."—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 386.

What is holiness, according to the oracles of God? Not a bare external religion, a round of outward duties, how many soever they be, and how exactly soever performed. No: gospel holiness is no less than the image of God stamped upon the heart; it is no other than the whole mind which was in Christ Jesus; it consists of all heavenly affections and tempers mingled together in one. It implies such a continual, thankful love to Him who hath not withheld from us his Son, his only Son, as makes it natural, and in a manner necessary to us, to love every child of man; as fills us "with bowels of mercies, kindness, gentleness, long-suffering." It is such a love of God as teaches us to be blameless in all manner of conversation; as enables us to present our souls and bodies, all we are, and all we have, all our thoughts, words, and actions, a continual sacrifice to God, acceptable through Christ Jesus.

Now this holiness can have no existence till we are renewed in the image of our mind. It cannot commence in the soul till that change be wrought; till, by the power of the Highest overshadowing us, we are "brought from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God; that is, till we are born again; which therefore is absolutely necessary in order to holiness.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 403, 404.

The highest perfection which man can attain, while the soul dwells in the body, does not exclude ignorance, and error, and a thousand other infirmities. Now from wrong judgments, wrong words and actions will often necessarily flow: and in some cases, wrong affections also may spring from the same source. I may judge wrong of you; I may think more or less highly of you than I ought to think; and this mistake in my judgment may not only occasion something wrong in my behaviour, but it may have a still deeper effect; it may occasion something wrong in my affection. From a wrong apprehension, I may love and esteem you either more or less than I ought. Nor can I be freed from a liableness to such a mistake while I remain in a corruptible body. A thousand infirmities, in consequence of this, will attend my spirit, till it returns to God who gave it. And, in numberless instances, it comes short of doing the will of God, as Adam did in paradise. Hence the best of men may say from the heart,

> "Every moment, Lord, I need
> The merit of thy death;"

for innumerable violations of the Adamic, as well as the angelic law. It is well, therefore, for us, that we are not now under these, but under the law of love. "Love is [now] the fulfilling of the law," which is given to fallen man. This is now, with respect to us, "the perfect law."

But even against this, through the present weakness of our understanding, we are continually liable to transgress. Therefore every man living needs the blood of atonement, or he could not stand before God.

What is then the perfection of which man is capable, while he dwells in a corruptible body? It is the complying with that kind command, "My son, give me thy heart." It is the "loving the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind." This is the sum of Christian perfection: it is all comprised in that one word, love. The first branch of it is the love of God: and as he that loves God loves his brother also, it is inseparably connected with the second; "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:" thou shalt love every man as thy own soul, as Christ loved us. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets:" these contain the whole of Christian perfection.

Another view of this is given us in those words of the great apostle, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." For although this immediately and directly refers to the humility of our Lord, yet it may be taken in a far more extensive sense, so as to include the whole disposition of his mind, all his affections, all his tempers, both toward God and man. Now it is certain that as there was no evil affection in him, so no good affection or temper was wanting. So that "whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are lovely," are all included in "the mind that was in Christ Jesus."

St. Paul, when writing to the Galatians, places perfection in yet another view. It is the one undivided *fruit of the Spirit*, which he describes thus: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity," (so the word should be translated here,) "meekness, temperance." What a glorious constellation of grace is here! Now suppose all these things to be knit

together in one, to be united together in the soul of a believer, this is Christian perfection.

Again: he writes to the Christians at Ephesus, of "putting on the new man, which is created after God in righteousness and true holiness:" and to the Colossians, of "the new man renewed after the image of him that created him:" plainly referring to the words in Genesis, chap. i, 27, "So God created man in his own image." Now the moral image of God consists (as the apostle observes) "in righteousness and true holiness." By sin this is totally destroyed. And we never can recover it till we are "created anew in Christ Jesus." And this is perfection.

St. Peter expresses it in a still different manner, though to the same effect: "As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation," 1 Pet. i, 15. According to this apostle, then, perfection is another name for universal holiness; inward and outward righteousness; holiness of life arising from holiness of heart.

If any expressions can be stronger than these, they are those of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, 1st Epistle v, 23, "The God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may the whole of you, the spirit, the soul, and the body, [this is the literal translation,] be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We cannot show this sanctification in a more excellent way than by complying with that exhortation of the apostle, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies [yourselves, your souls and bodies; a part put for the whole, by a common figure of speech] a living sacrifice unto God;" to whom ye were consecrated many years ago in baptism. When what was then devoted is actually presented to God, then is the man of God perfect.

To the same effect St. Peter says, 1st Epistle ii, 5, "Ye are a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, ac-

ceptable to God through Jesus Christ." But what sacrifices shall we offer now, seeing the Jewish dispensation is at an end? If you have truly presented yourselves to God, you offer up to him continually all your thoughts, and words, and actions, through the Son of his love, as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

Thus you experience that He whose name is called Jesus does not bear that name in vain: that he does, in fact, "save his people from their sins;" the root, as well as the branches. And this salvation from sin, from all sin, is another description of perfection, though indeed it expresses only the least, the lowest branch of it; only the negative part of the great salvation.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 168–170.

SECTION II.

How to be sought.

"But what is that faith whereby we are sanctified? saved from sin, and perfected in love?" It is a divine evidence and conviction, First, that God hath promised it in the Holy Scripture. Till we are thoroughly satisfied of this there is no moving one step farther. And one would imagine there needed not one word more to satisfy a reasonable man of this than the ancient promise, "Then will I circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." How clearly does this express the being perfected in love!—how strongly imply the being saved from all sin! For as long as love takes up the whole heart, what room is there for sin therein?

It is a divine evidence and conviction, secondly, that what God hath promised he is able to perform. Admitting, therefore, that "with men it is impossible" "to bring a clean thing out of an unclean," to purify the heart from

all sin, and to fill it with all holiness; yet this creates no difficulty in the case, seeing "with God all things are possible." And surely no one ever imagined it was possible to any power less than that of the Almighty! But if God speaks it shall be done. God saith, "Let there be light; and there [is] light."

It is, thirdly, a divine evidence and conviction that he is able and willing to do it now. And why not? Is not a moment to him the same as a thousand years? He cannot want more time to accomplish whatever is his will. And he cannot want to stay for any more *worthiness* or *fitness* in the persons he is pleased to honour. We may therefore boldly say, at any point of time, "Now is the day of salvation!" "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." "Behold all things are now ready, come unto the marriage."

To this confidence, that God is both able and willing to sanctify us now, there needs to be added one thing more, a divine evidence and conviction that he doeth it. In that hour it is done: God says to the inmost soul, "According to thy faith be it unto thee." Then the soul is pure from every spot of sin; it is clean "from all unrighteousness." The believer then experiences the deep meaning of those solemn words, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

"But does God work this great work in the soul gradually or instantaneously?" Perhaps it may be gradually wrought in some: I mean in this sense, they do not advert to the particular moment wherein sin ceases to be. But it is infinitely desirable, were it the will of God, that it should be done instantaneously; that the Lord should destroy sin "by the breath of his mouth," in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And so he generally does:

a plain fact of which there is evidence enough to satisfy any unprejudiced person. *Thou*, therefore, look for it every moment. Look for it in the way above described; in all those *good works* whereunto thou art "created anew in Christ Jesus." There is then no danger: you can be no worse, if you are no better for that expectation. For were you to be disappointed of your hope, still you lose nothing. But you shall not be disappointed of your hope: it will come, and will not tarry. Look for it then every day, every hour, every moment. Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it *now*, if you believe it is by faith. And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done *first*, *before* you are sanctified. You think, I must first *be* or *do* thus or thus. Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it *as you are;* and if as you are, then expect it *now*. It is of importance to observe, that there is an inseparable connection between these three points,—expect it *by faith;* expect it *as you are;* and, expect it *now*. To deny one of them is to deny them all. To allow one is to allow them all. Do *you* believe we are sanctified by faith? Be true then to your principle; and look for this blessing just as you are, neither better nor worse; as a poor sinner that has still nothing to pay, nothing to plead, but, Christ *died*. And if you look for it as you are, then expect it *now*. Stay for nothing: why should you? Christ is ready; and he is all you want. He is waiting for you: he is at the door! Let your inmost soul cry out,

> "Come in, come in, thou heavenly Guest,
> Nor hence again remove;
> But sup with me, and let the feast
> Be everlasting love."

Sermons, vol. i, pp. 390, 391.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF SALVATION.

SECTION I.

Its Nature.

SALVATION begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) preventing grace: including the first wish to please God; the first dawn of light concerning his will; and the first slight transient conviction of having sinned against him. All these imply some tendency toward life; some degree of salvation; the beginning of a deliverance from a blind, unfeeling heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God. Salvation is carried on by *convincing grace*, usually in Scripture termed *repentance;* which brings a larger measure of self-knowledge, and a farther deliverance from the heart of stone. Afterward we experience the proper Christian salvation; whereby, "through grace," we "are saved by faith;" consisting of those two grand branches, justification and sanctification. By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favour of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God. All experience, as well as Scripture, show this salvation to be both instantaneous and gradual. It begins the moment we are justified, in the holy, humble, gentle, patient love of God and man. It gradually increases from that moment, as "a grain of mustard seed, which, at first, is the least of all seeds," but afterward puts forth large branches, and becomes a great tree: till, in another instant, the heart is cleansed from all sin, and filled with pure love to God and man. But even that love increases more and more, till we "grow up in all things into Him

that is our head;" till we "attain the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 235, 236.

And, first, let us inquire, What is salvation? The salvation which is here spoken of, Eph. ii, 8, is not what is frequently understood by that word, the going to heaven, eternal happiness. It is not the soul's going to paradise, termed by our Lord, "Abraham's bosom." It is not a blessing which lies on the other side death; or, as we usually speak, in the other world. The very words of the text itself put this beyond all question: "Ye *are saved*." It is not something at a distance; it is a present thing; a blessing which, through the free mercy of God, ye are now in possession of. Nay, the words may be rendered, and that with equal propriety, "Ye *have been saved*:" so that the salvation which is here spoken of might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul till it is consummated in glory.

If we take this in its utmost extent, it will include all that is wrought in the soul by what is frequently termed natural conscience, but more properly, preventing grace; all the drawings of the Father; the desires after God which, if we yield to them, increase more and more; all that light wherewith the Son of God "enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world;" showing every man "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God;" all the convictions which his Spirit, from time to time, works in every child of man; although, it is true, the generality of men stifle them as soon as possible, and after a while forget, or at least deny, that they ever had them at all.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 384, 385.

SECTION II.

Its Extent.

Ye are saved (to comprise all in one word) from sin. This is the salvation which is through faith. This is that great salvation foretold by the angel, before God brought his First-begotten into the world: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." And neither here, nor in other parts of holy writ, is there any limitation or restriction. All his people, or, as it is elsewhere expressed, "all that believe in him," he will save from all their sins; from original and actual, past and present sin, "of the flesh and of the spirit." Through faith that is in him they are saved both from the guilt and from the power of it.

First, from the guilt of all past sin: for, whereas all the world is guilty before God, insomuch that should he "be extreme to mark what is done amiss, there is none that could abide it;" and whereas "by the law is" only "the knowledge of sin," but no deliverance from it, so that "by fulfilling the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in his sight;" now "the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is manifested unto all that believe." Now "they are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." "Him God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness for (or by) the remission of the sins that are past." Now hath Christ taken away "the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." He hath "blotted out the hand-writing that was against us, taking it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." "There is, therefore, no condemnation now to them which" believe in Christ Jesus.

And being saved from guilt, they are saved from fear.

Not indeed from a filial fear of offending; but, from all servile fear; from that fear which hath torment; from fear of punishment; from fear of the wrath of God, whom they now no longer regard as a severe master, but as an indulgent father. "They have not received again the spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father; the Spirit itself also bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God." They are also saved from the fear, though not from the possibility of falling away from the grace of God, and coming short of the great and precious promises: they are "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of their inheritance," Eph. i, 13. Thus have they "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. They rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts, through the Holy Ghost, which is given unto them." And hereby they are persuaded, (though perhaps not at all times, nor with the same fulness of persuasion,) that "neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Again, through this faith they are saved from the power of sin, as well as from the guilt of it. So the apostle declares, "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not," 1 John iii, 5, &c. Again, "Little children, let no man deceive you. He that committeth sin is of the devil. Whosoever believeth is born of God. And whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God." Once more, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not: but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not," 1 John v, 18.

He that is, by faith, born of God, sinneth not: 1. By any habitual sin; for all habitual sin is sin reigning: but sin cannot reign in any that believeth. Nor, 2. By any wilful sin, for his will, while he abideth in the faith, is utterly set against all sin, and abhorreth it as deadly poison. Nor, 3. By any sinful desire; for he continually desireth the holy and perfect will of God; and any tendency to an unholy desire, he, by the grace of God, stifleth in the birth. Nor, 4. Doth he sin by infirmities, whether in act, word, or thought: for his infirmities have no concurrence of his will; and without this they are not properly sins. Thus "he that is born of God doth not commit sin." And though he cannot say he hath not sinned, yet now "he sinneth not."

This then is the salvation which is through faith, even in the present world: a salvation from sin, and the consequences of sin, both often expressed in the word justification; which, taken in the largest sense, implies, a deliverance from guilt and punishment by the atonement of Christ actually applied to the soul of the sinner now believing on him, and a deliverance from the whole body of sin, through Christ formed in his heart. So that he who is thus justified, or saved by faith, is indeed born again. He is born again of the Spirit unto a new life "which is hid with Christ in God." "He is a new creature: old things are passed away: all things in him are become new." And as a new-born babe he gladly receives the *αδολον*, "sincere milk of the word, and grows thereby;" going on in the might of the Lord his God, from faith to faith, from grace to grace, until at length he comes unto "a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." *Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 15, 16.

SECTION III.

Obtained by Faith.

It is by faith we are saved, justified, and sanctified; taking that word in its highest sense. And first, How are we justified by faith? In what sense is this to be understood? I answer, Faith is the condition, and the only condition, of justification. It is the *condition:* none is justified but he that believes: without faith no man is justified. And it is the *only condition:* this alone is sufficient for justification. Every one that believes is justified, whatever else he has or has not. In other words, no man is justified till he believes; every man, when he believes, is justified.

2. "But does not God command us to repent also? Yea, and to 'bring forth fruits meet for repentance?' To cease, for instance, from doing evil, and learn to do well? And is not both the one and the other of the utmost necessity, insomuch that if we willingly neglect either, we cannot reasonably expect to be justified at all? But if this be so, how can it be said that faith is the only condition of justification?"

God does undoubtedly command us both to repent and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance; which, if we willingly neglect, we cannot reasonably expect to be justified at all: therefore both repentance, and fruits meet for repentance, are, in some sense, necessary to justification. But they are not necessary in the *same sense* with faith, nor in the *same degree.* Not in the *same degree;* for those fruits are only necessary *conditionally;* if there be time and opportunity for them. Otherwise a man may be justified without them, as was the *thief* upon the cross; (if we may call him so; for a late writer has discovered that he was no thief, but a very honest and respectable

person!) but he cannot be justified without faith; this is impossible. Likewise, let a man have ever so much repentance, or ever so many of the fruits meet for repentance, yet all this does not at all avail; he is not justified till he believes. But the moment he believes, with or without those fruits, yea, with more or less repentance, he is justified. Not in the *same sense;* for repentance and its fruits are only *remotely* necessary; necessary in order to faith; whereas faith is *immediately* and *directly* necessary to justification. It remains, that faith is the only condition which is *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to justification.

3. "But do you believe we are sanctified by faith? We know you believe that we are justified by faith; but do not you believe, and accordingly teach, that we are sanctified by our works?" So it has been roundly and vehemently affirmed for these five and twenty years: but I have constantly declared just the contrary; and that in all manner of ways. I have continually testified, in private and in public, that we are sanctified, as well as justified, by faith. And indeed the one of those great truths does exceedingly illustrate the other. Exactly as we are justified by faith, so are we sanctified by faith. Faith is the condition, and the only condition of sanctification, exactly as it is of justification. It is the *condition:* none is sanctified but he that believes; without faith no man is sanctified. And it is the *only condition:* this alone is sufficient for sanctification. Every one that believes is sanctified, whatever else he has or has not. In other words, no man is sanctified till he believes: every man when he believes is sanctified.

4. "But is there not a repentance consequent upon, as well as a repentance previous to, justification? And is it not incumbent on all that are justified to be 'zealous of good works?' Yea, are not these so necessary, that if a

man willingly neglect them he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified in the full sense; that is, perfected in love? Nay, can he grow at all in grace, in the loving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ? Yea, can he retain the grace which God has already given him? Can he continue in the faith which he has received, or in the favour of God? Do not you yourself allow all this, and continually assert it? But, if this be so, how can it be said that faith is the only condition of sanctification?"

5. I do allow all this, and continually maintain it as the truth of God. I allow there is a repentance consequent upon, as well as a repentance previous to, justification. It is incumbent on all that are justified to be zealous of good works. And these are so necessary, that if a man willingly neglect them he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified; he cannot grow in grace, in the image of God, the mind which was in Christ Jesus; nay, he cannot retain the grace he has received, he cannot continue in faith, or in the favour of God.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 387, 388.

SECTION IV.

What is meant by working out our own Salvation.

What are the steps which the Scriptures direct us to take in the working out of our own salvation? The prophet Isaiah gives us a general answer touching the first steps which we are to take: "Cease to do evil; learn to do well." If ever you desire that God should work in you that faith whereof cometh both present and eternal salvation, by the grace already given, fly from all sin as from the face of a serpent; carefully avoid every evil word and work; yea, abstain from all appearance of evil. And "learn to do well:" be zealous of good works, of works of piety, as well as works of mercy; family prayer, and

crying to God in secret. Fast in secret, and "your Father, which seeth in secret, he will reward you openly." "Search the Scriptures:" hear them in public, read them in private, and meditate therein. At every opportunity, be a partaker of the Lord's supper. "Do this in remembrance" of him; and he will meet you at his own table. Let your conversation be with the children of God; and see that it "be in grace, seasoned with salt." As ye have time, do good unto all men; to their souls and to their bodies. And herein "be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." It then only remains that ye deny yourselves and take up your cross daily. Deny yourselves every pleasure which does not prepare you for taking pleasure in God, and willingly embrace every means of drawing near to God, though it be a cross, though it be grievous to flesh and blood. Thus when you have redemption in the blood of Christ, you will "go on to perfection;" till "walking in the light as he in the light," you are enabled to testify that "he is faithful and just" not only to "forgive [your] sins, but to cleanse you from all unrighteousness."

"But (say some) what connection is there between the former and the latter clause of this sentence? Is there not rather a flat opposition between the one and the other? If it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do, what need is there of our working? Does not his working thus supercede the necessity of our working at all? Nay, does it not render our working impracticable, as well as unnecessary? For if we allow that God does all, what is there left for us to do?"

Such is the reasoning of flesh and blood. And at first hearing it is exceedingly plausible. But it is not solid; as will evidently appear, if we consider the matter more deeply. We shall then see there is no opposition between these; "God works; therefore do ye work;" but, on

the contrary, the closest connection; and that in two respects. For, first, God works; therefore you *can* work: secondly, God works; therefore you *must* work.

First, God worketh in you; therefore you *can* work: otherwise it would be impossible. If he did not work, it would be impossible for you to work out your own salvation. "With man this is impossible," saith our Lord, "for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." Yea, it is impossible for any man; for any that is born of a woman; unless God work in him. Seeing all men are, by nature, not only sick, but "dead in trespasses and in sins," it is not possible for them to do any thing well till God raises them from the dead. It was impossible for Lazarus to come forth till the Lord had given him life. And it is equally impossible for us to *come* out of our sins, yea, or to make the least motion toward it, till He who hath all power in heaven and earth calls our dead souls into life.

Yet this is no excuse for those who continue in sin, and lay the blame upon their Maker by saying, "It is God only that must quicken us, for we cannot quicken our own souls." For allowing that all the souls of men are dead in sin by *nature*, this excuses none, seeing there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called *natural conscience*. But this is not natural: it is more properly termed *preventing grace*. Every man has a greater or less measure of this, which waiteth not for the call of man. Every one has, sooner or later, good desires; although the generality of men stifle them before they can strike deep root, or produce any considerable fruit. Every one has some measure of that light, some faint glimmering ray, which, sooner or later, more or less, enlightens every man that cometh into the world.

And every one, unless he be one of the small number whose conscience is seared with a hot iron, feels more or less uneasy when he acts contrary to the light of his own conscience. So that no man sins because he has not grace, but because he doth not use the grace which he hath.

Therefore, inasmuch as God works in you, you are now able to work out your own salvation. Since he worketh in you of his own good pleasure, without any merit of yours, both to will and to do, it is possible for you to fulfil all righteousness. It is possible for you to "love God, because he hath first loved us;" and to "walk in love," after the pattern of our great Master. We know, indeed, that word of his to be absolutely true, "Without me ye can do nothing." But, on the other hand, we know every believer can say, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me."

Meantime let us remember, that God has joined these together in the experience of every believer: and therefore we must take care not to imagine they are ever to be put asunder. We must beware of that mock humility which teaches us to say, in excuse for our wilful disobedience, "O, I can do nothing!" and stops there, without once naming the grace of God. Pray, think twice. Consider what you say. I hope you wrong yourself. For if it be really true that you can do nothing, then you have no faith. And if you have not faith, you are in a wretched condition: you are not in a state of salvation. Surely it is not so. You can do something, through Christ strengthening you. Stir up the spark of grace which is now in you, and he will give you more grace.

Secondly, God worketh in you; therefore you *must* work: you must be "workers together with him," (they are the very words of the apostle,) otherwise he will cease working. The general rule on which his gracious dispensations invarably proceed is this: "Unto him that hath

shall be given, but from him that hath not"—that doth not improve the grace already given—" shall be taken away what he assuredly hath" (so the words ought to be rendered.) Even St. Augustine, who is generally supposed to favour the contrary doctrine, makes that just remark, *Qui fecit nos sine nobis, non salvabit nos sine nobis:* " He that made us without ourselves will not save us without ourselves." He will not save us unless we " save ourselves from this untoward generation;" unless we ourselves " fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life;" unless we " agonize to enter in at the straight gate," " deny ourselves, and take up our cross daily," and labour by every possible means to " make our own calling and election sure."

" Labour," then, brethren, " not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life." Say, with our blessed Lord, though in a somewhat different sense, " My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." In consideration that he still worketh in you, be never " weary of well doing." Go on, in virtue of the grace of God preventing, accompanying, and following you, in " the work of faith, in the patience of hope, and the labour of love." " Be ye steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." And " the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of his sheep [Jesus] make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you what is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever." *Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 236-239.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

SECTION I.

A Christian described.

Who is a Christian indeed? What does that term properly imply? It has been so long abused, I fear, not only to mean nothing at all, but, what was far worse than nothing, to be a cloak for the vilest hypocrisy, for the grossest abominations and immoralities of every kind, that it is high time to rescue it out of the hands of wretches that are a reproach to human nature: to show determinately what manner of man he is to whom this name of right belongs.

A Christian cannot think of the Author of his being without abasing himself before him: without a deep sense of the distance between a worm of the earth and Him that sitteth on the circle of the heavens. In his presence he sinks into the dust, knowing himself to be less than nothing in his eye; and being conscious, in a manner words cannot express, of his own littleness, ignorance, foolishness. So that he can only cry out, from the fulness of his heart, "O God! what is man! what am I!"

He has a continual sense of his dependance on the Parent of good for his being, and all the blessings that attend it. To him he refers every natural and every moral endowment; with all that is commonly ascribed either to fortune, or to the wisdom, courage, or merit of the possessor. And hence he acquiesces in whatsoever appears to be his will, not only with patience, but with thankfulness. He willingly resigns all he is, all he has, to his wise and gracious disposal. The ruling temper of his heart is the

most absolute submission, and the tenderest gratitude to his sovereign Benefactor. And this grateful love creates filial fear: an awful reverence toward him, and an earnest care not to give place to any disposition, not to admit any action, word, or thought, which might in any degree displease that indulgent Power to whom he owes his life, breath, and all things.

And as he has the strongest affection for the Fountain of all good, so he has the firmest confidence in him: a confidence which neither pleasure nor pain, neither life nor death can shake. But yet this, far from creating sloth or indolence, pushes him on to the most vigorous industry. It causes him to put forth all his strength in obeying Him in whom he confides. So that he is never faint in his mind, never weary of doing whatever he believes to be his will. And as he knows the most acceptable worship of God is to imitate him he worships, so he is continually labouring to transcribe into himself all his imitable perfections; in particular his justice, mercy, and truth, so eminently displayed in all his creatures.

Above all, remembering that God is love, he is conformed to the same likeness. He is full of love to his neighbour, of universal love; not confined to one sect or party; not restrained to those who agree with him in opinions, in outward modes of worship; or to those who are allied to him by blood, or recommended by nearness of place. Neither does he love those only that love him, or are endeared to him by intimacy of acquaintance. But his love resembles that of Him whose mercy is over all his works. It soars above all these scanty bounds, embracing neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies: yea, not only the good and gentle, but also the froward; the evil and unthankful. For he loves every soul that God has made; every child of man, of whatever place or nation. And yet this universal benevolence does in no wise

interfere with a peculiar regard for his relations, friends, and benefactors; a fervent love for his country; and the most endeared affection to all men of integrity, of clear and generous virtue.

His love to these, so to all mankind, is in itself generous and disinterested; springing from no view of advantage to himself, from no regard to profit or praise: no, nor even the pleasure of loving. This is the daughter, not the parent of affection. By experience he knows that social love (if it mean the love of our neighbour) is absolutely different from self-love, even of the most allowable kind. Just as different as the objects at which they point. And yet it is sure, that, if they are under due regulations, each will give additional force to the other, till they mix together never to be divided.

And this universal, disinterested love, is productive of all right affections. It is fruitful of gentleness, tenderness, sweetness; of humanity, courtesy, and affability. It makes a Christian rejoice in the virtues of all, and bear a part in their happiness; at the same time that he sympathizes with their pains, and compassionates their infirmities. It creates modesty, condescension, prudence, together with calmness and evenness of temper. It is the parent of generosity, openness, and frankness; void of jealousy and suspicion. It begets candour, and willingness to believe and hope whatever is kind and friendly of every man; and invincible patience, never overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good.

The same love constrains him to converse, not only with a strict regard to truth, but with artless sincerity and genuine simplicity, as one in whom there is no guile. And not content with abstaining from all such expressions as are contrary to justice or truth, he endeavours to refrain from every unloving word, either to a present or of an absent person: in all his conversation aiming at this,

either to improve himself in knowledge or virtue, or to make those with whom he converses some way wiser, or better, or happier, than they were before.

The same love is productive of all right actions. It leads him into an earnest and steady discharge of all social offices, of whatever is due to relations of every kind; to his friends, to his country, and to any particular community whereof he is a member. It prevents his willingly hurting or grieving any man. It guides him into a uniform practice of justice and mercy, equally extensive with the principle whence it flows. It constrains him to do all possible good, of every possible kind, to all men: and makes him invariably resolved, in every circumstance of life, to do that, and that only, to others, which, supposing he were himself in the same situation, he would desire they should do to him.

And as he is easy to others, so he is easy to himself. He is free from the painful swellings of pride, from the flames of anger, from the impetuous gusts of irregular self-will. He is no longer tortured with envy, or malice, or with unreasonable and hurtful desire. He is no more enslaved to the pleasures of sense, but has the full power both over his mind and body, in a continued cheerful course of sobriety, of temperance, and chastity. He knows how to use all things in their place, and yet is superior to them all. He stands above those low pleasures of imagination which captivate vulgar minds, whether arising from what mortals term greatness, or novelty, or beauty. All these, too, he can taste, and still look upward; still aspire to nobler enjoyments. Neither is he a slave to fame: popular breath affects not him: he stands steady and collected in himself.

And he who seeks no praise, cannot fear dispraise. Censure gives him no uneasiness; being conscious to himself that he would not willingly offend, and that he has

the approbation of the Lord of all. He cannot fear want, knowing in whose hand is the earth and the fulness thereof, and that it is impossible for him to withhold from one that fears him any manner of thing that is good. He cannot fear pain, knowing it will never be sent unless it be for his real advantage; and that then his strength will be proportioned to it, as it has always been in times past. He cannot fear death; being able to trust Him he loves with his soul as well as his body; yea, glad to leave the corruptible body in the dust till it is raised incorruptible and immortal. So that in honour or shame, in abundance or want, in ease or pain, in life or in death, always, and in all things, he has learned to be content, to be easy, thankful, happy.

He is happy in knowing there is a God, an intelligent Cause and Lord of all, and that he is not the produce either of blind chance or inexorable necessity. He is happy in the full assurance he has that this Creator and End of all things is a being of boundless wisdom, of infinite power to execute all the designs of his wisdom, and of no less infinite goodness to direct all his power to the advantage of all his creatures. Nay, even the consideration of his immutable justice, rendering to all their due, of his unspotted holiness, of his all-sufficiency in himself, and of that immense ocean of all perfections which centre in God from eternity to eternity, is a continual addition to the happiness of a Christian.

A farther addition is made thereto, while in contemplating even the things that surround him, that thought strikes warmly upon his heart,

> "These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!"

while he takes knowledge of the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and wisdom in the things that are seen, the heavens, the earth, the fowls of the air, the lilies of the field. How much more while rejoicing in the

constant care which he still takes of the work of his own hand, he breaks out, in a transport of love and praise, "O Lord our Governor, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Thou that hast set thy glory above the heavens!" While he, as it were, sees the Lord sitting upon his throne, and ruling all things well; while he observes the general providence of God coextended with his whole creation, and surveys all the effects of it in the heavens and the earth, as a well-pleased spectator; while he sees the wisdom and goodness of his general government descending to every particular; so presiding over the whole universe as over a single person, so watching over every single person as if he were the whole universe; how does he exult when he reviews the various traces of the almighty goodness in what has befallen himself in the several circumstances and changes of his own life! All which, he now sees, have been allotted to him, and dealt out in number, weight, and measure. With what triumph of soul, in surveying either the general or particular providence of God, does he observe every line pointing out an hereafter, every scene opening into eternity.

He is peculiarly and inexpressibly happy in the clearest and fullest conviction, "This all-powerful, all-wise, all-gracious Being, this Governor of all, loves me. This lover of my soul is always with me, is never absent, no, not for a moment. And I love him; there is none in heaven but thee, none on earth that I desire beside thee! And he has given me to resemble himself; he has stamped his image on my heart. And I live unto him; I do only his will; I glorify him with my body and my spirit. And it will not be long before I shall die unto him; I shall die into the arms of God. And then, farewell sin and pain; then it only remains that I should live with him for ever."

This is the plain, naked portraiture of a Christian. But be not prejudiced against him for his name. Forgive his

particularities of opinion, and (what you think) superstitious modes of worship. These are circumstances but of small concern; and do not enter into the essence of his character. Cover them with a veil of love, and look at the substance; his tempers, his holiness, his happiness.

Can calm reason conceive either a more amiable or a more desirable character? Is it your own? Away with names! Away with opinions! I care not what you are called. I ask not (it does not deserve a thought) what opinion you are of; so you are conscious to yourself, that you are the man whom I have been (however faintly) describing.

Do not you know you ought to be such? Is the Governor of the world well pleased that you are not? Do you (at least) desire it? I would to God that desire may penetrate your inmost soul; and that you may have no rest in your spirit till you are not only almost, but altogether a Christian!—*Works*, vol. v, pp. 752–756.

SECTION II.

Evidences of Adoption.

Every man, applying those Scriptural marks to himself, may know whether he is a child of God. Thus, if he know, first, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God," into all holy tempers and actions, "they are the sons of God;" (for which he has the infallible assurance of Holy Writ;) secondly, I am thus "led by the Spirit of God;" he will easily conclude—therefore I am a son of God.

Agreeably to this are those plain declarations of St. John in his first epistle: "Hereby we know that we do know him, if we keep his commandments," chap. ii, 3. "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him;"

that we are indeed the children of God, ver. 5. "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him," ver. 29. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," chap. iii, 14. "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him," (ver. 19,) namely, because we "love one another, not in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his [loving] Spirit," chap. iv, 13. And, "Hereby we know that he abideth in us by the [obedient] spirit which he hath given us," chap. iii, 24.

It is highly probable there never were any children of God, from the beginning of the world unto this day, who were farther advanced in the grace of God, and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, than the apostle John, at the time when he wrote these words, and the fathers in Christ to whom he wrote. Notwithstanding which, it is evident both the apostle himself, and all those pillars in God's temple, were very far from despising these marks of their being the children of God; and that they applied them to their own souls for the confirmation of their faith. Yet all this is no other than rational evidence, the witness of our spirit, our reason, or understanding. It all resolves into this: Those who have these marks are children of God: but we have these marks: therefore, we are children of God.

But how does it appear that we have these marks? This is a question which still remains. How does it appear that we do love God and our neighbour, and that we keep his commandments?

Observe that the meaning of the question is, How does it appear to *ourselves?* not to *others.* I would ask him then that proposes this question, How does it appear to you that you are alive? and that you are now in ease, and

not in pain? Are you not immediately conscious of it? By the same immediate consciousness you will know if your soul is alive to God; if you are saved from the pain of proud wrath, and have the ease of a meek and quiet spirit. By the same means you cannot but perceive if you love, rejoice, and delight in God. By the same you must be directly assured if you love your neighbour as yourself; if you are kindly affectioned to all mankind, and full of gentleness and long-suffering. And with regard to the outward mark of the children of God, which is, according to St. John, the keeping his commandments, you undoubtedly know in your own breasts, if, by the grace of God, it belongs to you. Your conscience informs you, from day to day, if you do not take the name of God within your lips, unless with seriousness and devotion, with reverence and godly fear; if you remember the sabbath day to keep it holy; if you honour your father and mother; if you do to all as you would they should do unto you; if you possess your body in sanctification and honour; and if, whether you eat or drink, you are temperate therein, and do all to the glory of God.

Now this is properly the testimony of our own spirit; even the testimony of our own conscience that God hath given us to be holy of heart, and holy in outward conversation. It is a consciousness of our having received, in and by the Spirit of adoption, the tempers mentioned in the word of God as belonging to his adopted children, even a loving heart toward God and toward all mankind; hanging, with childlike confidence, on God our Father, desiring nothing but him, casting all our care upon him, and embracing every child of man with earnest, tender affection; so as to be ready to lay down our life for our brother, as Christ laid down his life for us: a consciousness that we are inwardly conformed, by the Spirit of God, to the image of his Son, and that we walk before him in justice, mercy,

and truth, doing the things which are pleasing in his sight.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 86, 87.

SECTION III.

Sin remains in a Believer.

Is there then sin in him that is in Christ? Does sin *remain* in one that believes in him? Is there any sin in them that are born of God, or are they wholly delivered from it? Let no one imagine this to be a question of mere curiosity; or that it is of little importance whether it be determined one way or the other. Rather it is a point of the utmost moment to every serious Christian; the resolving of which very nearly concerns both his present and eternal happiness.

And yet I do not know that ever it was controverted in the primitive church. Indeed there was no room for disputing concerning it, as all Christians were agreed. And so far as I have ever observed, the whole body of ancient Christians who have left us any thing in writing, declare with one voice, that even believers in Christ, till they are "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," have need to "wrestle with flesh and blood," with an evil nature, as well as "with principalities and powers."

And herein our own Church (as indeed in most points) exactly copies after the primitve; declaring in her ninth article, "Original sin is the corruption of the nature of every man, whereby man is in his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth contrary to the spirit. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek *φρονημα σαρκος*, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe, yet this lust hath of itself the nature of sin."

The same testimony is given by all other churches; not

only by the Greek and Romish church, but by every reformed church in Europe, of whatever denomination. Indeed some of these seem to carry the thing too far; so describing the corruption of heart in a believer, as scarce to allow that he has dominion over it, but rather is in bondage thereto; and, by this means, they leave hardly any distinction between a believer and an unbeliever. *Sermons*, vol. i, p. 108.

But we should likewise be convinced, that as sin remains in our hearts, so it *cleaves* to all our words and actions. Indeed it is to be feared that many of our words are more than mixed with sin; that they are sinful altogether; for such, undoubtedly, is all *uncharitable conversation;* all which does not spring from brotherly love; all which does not agree with that golden rule, "What ye would that others should do to you, even so do unto them." Of this kind is all back-biting, all tale-bearing, all whispering, all evil-speaking, that is, repeating the faults of absent persons; for none would have others repeat his faults when he is absent. Now how few are there, even among believers, who are in no degree guilty of this; who steadily observe the good old rule, "Of the dead and the absent nothing but good?" And suppose they do, do they likewise abstain from *unprofitable conversation?* Yet all this is unquestionably sinful, and "grieves the Holy Spirit of God:" yea, and "for every idle word that men shall speak they shall give an account in the day of judgment."

But let it be supposed that they continually "watch and pray," and so do "not enter into this temptation;" that they constantly set a watch before their mouth, and keep the door of their lips; suppose they exercise themselves herein, that *all* their "conversation may be in grace, seasoned with salt, and meet to minister grace to the hearers;" yet do they not daily slide into useless discourse, notwithstanding all their caution? And even when they endeavour

to speak for God, are their words pure, free from unholy mixtures? Do they find nothing wrong in their very *intentions?* Do they speak merely to please God, and not partly to please themselves? Is it wholly to do the will of God, and not their own will also? Or, if they begin with a single eye, do they go on "looking unto Jesus," and talking with him all the time they are talking with their neighbour? When they are reproving sin, do they feel no anger or unkind temper to the sinner? When they are instructing the ignorant, do they not find any pride or self-preference? When they are comforting the afflicted, or provoking one another to love and to good works, do they never perceive any inward self-commendation: "*Now you have spoke well?*" Or any vanity, a desire that others should think so, and esteem them on the account? In some or all these respects, how much sin cleaves to the best *conversation*, even of believers? the conviction of which is another branch of the repentance which belongs to them that are justified.

And how much sin, if their conscience is thoroughly awake, may they find cleaving to their *actions* also? Nay, are there not many of these which, though they are such as the world would not condemn, yet cannot be commended, no, nor excused, if we judge by the word of God? Are there not many of their actions which, they themselves know, are not to the glory of God? Many wherein they did not even aim at this; which were not undertaken with an eye to God? And of those that were, are there not many wherein their eye is not singly fixed on God? Wherein they are doing their own will at least as much as His; and seeking to please themselves as much, if not more, than to please God? And while they are endeavouring to do good to their neighbour, do they not feel wrong tempers of various kinds? Hence their good actions, so called, are far from being strictly such; being

polluted with a mixture of evil. Such are their works of *mercy*. And is not the same mixture in their works of *piety?* While they are hearing the word which is able to save their souls, do they not frequently find such thoughts as make them afraid lest it should turn to their condemnation rather than their salvation? Is it not often the same case while they are endeavouring to offer up their prayers to God, whether in public or private? Nay, while they are engaged in the most solemn service, even while they are at the table of the Lord, what manner of thoughts arise in them! Are not their hearts sometimes wandering to the ends of the earth; sometimes filled with such imaginations as make them fear lest all their sacrifice should be an abomination to the Lord? So that they are now more ashamed of their best duties than they were once of their worst sins.

Again: how many *sins of omission* are they chargeable with? We know the words of the apostle, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." But do they not know a thousand instances wherein they might have done good to enemies, to strangers, to their brethren, either with regard to their bodies or their souls, and they did it not? How many omissions have they been guilty of in their duty toward God! How many opportunities of communicating, of hearing his word, of public or private prayer, have they neglected! So great reason had even that holy man, Archbishop Usher, after all his labours for God, to cry out, almost with his dying breath, "Lord, forgive me my sins of omission!"

But, besides these outward omissions, may they not find in themselves *inward defects* without number? Defects of every kind: they have not the love, the fear, the confidence they ought to have toward God. They have not the love which is due to their neighbour, to every child of man; no, nor even that which is due to their brethren,

to every child of God, whether those that are at a distance from them, or those with whom they are immediately connected. They have no holy temper in the degree they ought; they are defective in every thing: in a deep consciousness of which they are ready to cry out with M. De Renty, "I am a ground all overrun with thorns;" or with Job, "I am vile: I abhor myself, and repent as in dust and ashes."—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 119-121.

SECTION IV.

His Love.

"CHARITY," or love, (as it were to be wished it had been rendered throughout, being a far plainer and less ambiguous word,) the love of our neighbour, as Christ hath loved us, "suffereth long;" is patient toward all men: it suffers all the weakness, ignorance, errors, infirmities, all the frowardness, and littleness of faith, of the children of God; all the malice and wickedness of the children of the world. And it suffers all this, not only for a time, for a short season, but to the end; still feeding our enemy when he hungers; if he thirst, still giving him drink; thus continually "heaping coals of fire," of melting love, "upon his head."

And in every step toward this desirable end, the "overcoming evil with good," "love is kind;" (χρηστευεται: a word not easily translated;) it is *soft*, *mild*, *benign*. It stands at the utmost distance from moroseness, from all harshness or sourness of spirit; and inspires the sufferer at once with the most amiable sweetness, and the most fervent and tender affection.

Consequently "love envieth not:" it is impossible it should; it is directly opposite to that baneful temper. It cannot be that he who has this tender affection to all,

who earnestly wishes all temporal and spiritual blessings, all good things in this world and the world to come, to every soul that God hath made, should be pained at his bestowing any good gift on any child of man. If he has himself received the same, he does not grieve, but rejoice that another partakes of the common benefit. If he has not, he blesses God that his brother at least has, and is herein happier than himself. And the greater his love, the more does he rejoice in the blessings of all mankind; the farther is he removed from every kind and degree of envy toward any creature.

Love ου περπερευεται—not "vaunteth not itself:" which coincides with the very next words; but rather, (as the word properly imports,) *is not rash*, or *hasty* in judging; it will not hastily condemn any one. It does not pass a severe sentence on a slight or sudden view of things: it first weighs all the evidence, particularly that which is brought in favour of the accused. A true lover of his neighbour is not like the generality of men, who, even in cases of the nicest nature, "see a little, presume a great deal, and so jump to the conclusion." No: he proceeds with wariness and circumspection, taking heed to every step; willingly subscribing to that rule of the ancient heathen, (O where will the modern Christian appear!) "I am so far from lightly believing what one man says against another, that I will not easily believe what a man says against himself. I will always allow him second thoughts, and many times counsel too."

It follows, love "is not puffed up:" it does not incline or suffer any man "to think more highly of himself than he ought to think;" but rather to think soberly: yea, it humbles the soul unto the dust. It destroys all high conceits, engendering pride; and makes us rejoice to be as nothing, to be little and vile, the lowest of all, the servant of all. They who are "kindly affectioned one to another

with brotherly love," cannot but "in honour prefer one another." Those who, having the same love, are of one accord, do in lowliness of mind "each esteem other better than themselves."

"It doth not behave itself unseemly:" it is not rude, or willingly offensive to any. It "renders to all their due; fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour; courtesy, civility, humanity, to all the world; in their several degrees "honouring all men." A late writer defines good breeding, nay, the highest degree of it, politeness, "A continual desire to please, appearing in all the behaviour:" but if so, there is none so well-bred as a Christian, a lover of all mankind. For he cannot but desire to "please all men for their good to edification:" and this desire cannot be hid: it will necessarily appear in all his intercourse with men. For his "love is without dissimulation:" it will appear in all his actions and conversation; yea, and will constrain him, though without guile, to "become all things to all men, if by any means he may save some."

And in becoming all things to all men, "love seeketh not her own." In striving to please all men, the lover of mankind has no eye at all to his own temporal advantage. He covets no man's silver, or gold, or apparel: he desires nothing but the salvation of their souls: yea, in some sense he may be said *not to seek his own* spiritual, any more than temporal advantage; for while he is on the full stretch to save their souls from death, he, as it were, forgets himself. He does not think of himself so long as that zeal for the glory of God swallows him up. Nay, at some times he may almost seem, through an excess of love, to give up himself, both his soul and his body; while he cries out, with Moses, "O, this people have sinned a great sin; yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin;—and if not, blot me out of the book which thou hast written!" Exod. xxxii, 32, 33: or with St. Paul, "I could wish

that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh!" Rom. ix, 3.

No marvel that such "love is not provoked:" *ε παροξυνεται.* Let it be observed, the word *easily*, strangely inserted in the translation, is not in the original; St. Paul's words are absolute. "Love is not provoked;" it is not provoked to unkindness toward any one. Occasions, indeed, will frequently occur; outward provocations of various kinds; but love does not yield to provocation; it triumphs over all. In all trials it looketh unto Jesus, and is more than conqueror in his love.

Love prevents a thousand provocations which would otherwise arise, because it "thinketh no evil." Indeed the merciful man cannot avoid knowing many things that are evil, he cannot but see them with his own eyes, and hear them with his own ears: for love does not put out his eyes, so that it is impossible for him not to see that such things are done; neither does it take away his understanding, any more than his senses, so that he cannot but know that they are evil. For instance: when he sees a man strike his neighbour, or hears him blaspheme God, he cannot either question the thing done, or the words spoken, or doubt of their being evil. Yet, *ε λογιζεται το κακον.* The word *λογιζεται*, (*thinketh,*) does not refer either to our seeing and hearing, or to the first and involuntary acts of our understanding; but to our *willingly thinking* what we need not; our *inferring* evil where it does not appear; to our *reasoning* concerning things which we do not see; our *supposing* what we have neither seen nor heard. This is what true love absolutely destroys. It tears up, root and branch, all *imagining* what we have not known. It casts out all jealousies, all evil surmisings, all readiness to believe evil. It is frank, open, unsuspicious; and, as it cannot design, so neither does it fear evil.

It "rejoiceth not in iniquity:" common as this is even

among those who bear the name of Christ, who scruple not to rejoice over their enemy when he falleth either into affliction, or terror, or sin. Indeed how hardly can they avoid this who are zealously attached to any party? How difficult is it for them not to be pleased with any fault which they discover in those of the opposite party, with any real or supposed blemish, either in their principles or practice? What warm defender of any cause is clear of these? Yea, who is so calm as to be altogether free? Who does not rejoice when his adversary makes a false step which he thinks will advantage his own cause? Only a man of love. He alone weeps over either the sin or folly of his enemy, takes no pleasure in hearing or in repeating it, but rather desires that it may be forgotten for ever.

But he "rejoiceth in the truth," wheresoever it is found; in "the truth which is after godliness;" bringing forth its proper fruit, holiness of heart, and holiness of conversation. He rejoices to find that even those who oppose him, whether with regard to opinions, or some points of practice, are nevertheless lovers of God, and in other respects unreproveable. He is glad to hear good of them, and to speak all he can consistently with truth and justice. Indeed, good in general is his glory and joy, wherever diffused throughout the race of mankind. As a citizen of the world he claims a share in the happiness of all the inhabitants of it. Because he is a man, he is not unconcerned in the welfare of any man; but enjoys whatsoever brings glory to God, and promotes peace and good will among men.

This "love covereth all things:" (so, without all doubt, *παντα στεγει* should be translated; for otherwise it would be the very same with *παντα υπομενει*, *endureth all things*:) because the merciful man rejoiceth not in iniquity, neither does he willingly make mention of it. Whatever evil he sees, hears, or knows, he nevertheless conceals, so far as

he can, without making himself "partaker of other men's sins." Wheresoever, or with whomsoever he is, if he sees any thing which he approves not, it goes not out of his lips, unless to the person concerned, if haply he may gain his brother. So far is he from making the faults or failings of others the matter of his conversation, that of the absent he never does speak at all, unless he can speak well. A tale-bearer, a backbiter, a whisperer, an evil-speaker, is to him all one as a murderer. He would just as soon cut his neighbour's throat as thus murder his reputation. Just as soon would he think of diverting himself by setting fire to his neighbour's house, as of thus "scattering abroad arrows, firebrands, and death," and saying, "Am I not in sport?"

He makes one only exception. Sometimes he is convinced that it is for the glory of God, or (which comes to the same) the good of his neighbour, that an evil should not be covered. In this case, for the benefit of the innocent, he is constrained to declare the guilty. But even here, 1. He will not speak at all till love, superior love constrains him. 2. He cannot do it from a general confused view of doing good, or promoting the glory of God, but from a clear sight of some particular end, some determinate good which he pursues. 3. Still he cannot speak unless he be fully convinced that this very means is necessary to that end; that the end cannot be answered, at least not so effectually, by any other way. 4. He then doeth it with the utmost sorrow and reluctance; using it as the last and worst medicine, a desperate remedy in a desperate case, a kind of poison never to be used but to expel poison. Consequently, 5. He uses it as sparingly as possible. And this he does with fear and trembling lest he should transgress the law of love, by speaking too much, more than he would have done by not speaking at all.

Love "believeth all things." It is always willing to

think the best; to put the most favourable construction on every thing. It is ever ready to believe whatever may tend to the advantage of any one's character. It is easily convinced of (what it earnestly desires) the innocence or integrity of any man; or, at least, of the sincerity of his repentance, if he had once erred from the way. It is glad to excuse whatever is amiss; to condemn the offender as little as possible; and to make all the allowance for human weakness which can be done without betraying the truth of God.

And when it can no longer believe, then love "hopeth all things." Is any evil related of any man? love hopes that the relation is not true, that the thing related was never done. Is it certain it was? "But perhaps it was not done with such circumstances as are related; so that, allowing the fact, there is room to hope it was not so ill as it is represented." Was the action, apparently, undeniably evil? Love hopes the intention was not so. Is it clear the design was evil too? "Yet might it not spring from the settled temper of the heart, but from a start of passion, or from some vehement temptation which hurried the man beyond himself?" And even when it cannot be doubted but all the actions, designs, and tempers are equally evil; still love hopes that God will at last make bare his arm, and get himself the victory; and that there shall be "joy in heaven over [this] one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance."

Lastly: it "endureth all things." This completes the character of him that is truly merciful. He endureth not some, not many things only, not most, but absolutely *all things*. Whatever the injustice, the malice, the cruelty of men can inflict, he is able to suffer. He calls nothing intolerable; he never says of any thing, "This is not to be borne." No: he can not only do, but suffer all things

through Christ which strengtheneth him. And all he suffers does not destroy his love, nor impair it in the least. It is proof against all. It is a flame that burns even in the midst of the great deep. "Many waters cannot quench" his "love, neither can the floods drown it." It triumphs over all. It "never faileth," either in time or in eternity.

> "Thus, in obedience to what Heaven decrees,
> Knowledge shall fail, and prophecy shall cease;
> But lasting charity's more ample sway,
> Nor bound by time, nor subject to decay,
> In happy triumph shall for ever live,
> And endless good diffuse, and endless praise receive."

So shall "the merciful obtain mercy;" not only by the blessing of God upon all their ways, by his now repaying the love they bear to their brethren a thousandfold into their own bosom; but likewise by "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory," in the "kingdom prepared for them from the beginning of the world."—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 193–198.

Faith itself, even Christian faith, the faith of God's elect, the faith of the operation of God, still is only the handmaid of love. As glorious and honourable as it is, it is not the end of the commandment. God hath given this honour to love alone: love is the end of all the commandments of God. Love is the end, the sole end, of every dispensation of God, from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things. And it will endure when heaven and earth flee away; for "love [alone] never faileth." Faith will totally fail; it will be swallowed up in sight, in the everlasting vision of God. But even then love,

> "Its nature and its office still the same,
> Lasting its lamp, and unconsumed its flame,
> In deathless triumph shall for ever live,
> And endless good diffuse, and endless praise receive."

Very excellent things are spoken of faith, and whosoever is a partaker thereof may well say with the apostle, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift." Yet still it loses all its excellence when brought into a comparison with love. What St. Paul observes concerning the superior glory of the gospel above that of the law may with great propriety be spoken of the superior glory of love above that of faith: "Even that which was made glorious hath no glory in this respect by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away is glorious, much more doth that which remaineth exceed in glory." Yea, all the glory of faith, before it is done away, arises hence, that it ministers to love: it is the great temporary means which God has ordained to promote that eternal end.

Let those who magnify faith beyond all proportion, so as to swallow up all things else, and who so totally misapprehend the nature of it as to imagine it stands in the place of love, consider farther, that as love will exist after faith, so it did exist long before it. The angels who from the moment of their creation beheld the face of their Father that is in heaven had no occasion for faith, it its general notion, as it is the evidence of things not seen. Neither had they need of faith, in its more particular acceptation, faith in the blood of Jesus: for he took not upon him the nature of angels, but only the seed of Abraham. There was therefore no place, before the foundation of the world, for faith either in the general or particular sense. But there was for love. Love existed from eternity in God, the great ocean of love. Love had a place in all the children of God, from the moment of their creation: they received at once from their gracious Creator, to exist and to love.

Nor is it certain (as ingeniously and plausibly as many have descanted upon this) that faith, even in the general

sense of the word, had any place in paradise. It is highly probable, from that short and uncircumstantial account which we have in holy writ, that Adam, before he rebelled against God, walked with him by sight and not by faith:

> "For then his reason's eye was sharp and clear,
> And (as an eagle can behold the sun)
> Could have approach'd the Eternal Light, as near
> As th' intellectual angels could have done."

He was then able to talk with Him face to face, whose face we cannot now see and live; and consequently had no need of that faith whose office it is to supply the want of sight.

On the other hand it is absolutely certain faith, in its particular sense, had then no place. For in that sense it necessarily presupposes sin, and the wrath of God declared against the sinner; without which there is no need of an atonement for sin in order to the sinner's reconciliation with God. Consequently, as there was no need of an atonement before the fall, so there was no place for faith in that atonement; man being then pure from every stain of sin; holy as God is holy. But love even then filled his heart; it reigned in him without a rival; and it was only when love was lost by sin that faith was added, not for its own sake, nor with any design that it should exist any longer than until it had answered the end for which it was ordained, namely, to restore man to the love from which he was fallen. At the fall, therefore, was added this evidence of things unseen, which before was utterly needless; this confidence in redeeming love, which could not possibly have any place till the promise was made that "the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head."

Faith then was originally designed of God to re-establish the law of love. Therefore, in speaking thus, we are

not undervaluing it, or robbing it of its due praise; but, on the contrary, showing its real worth, exalting it in its just proportion, and giving it that very place which the wisdom of God assigned it from the beginning. It is the grand means of restoring that holy love wherein man was originally created. It follows, that although faith is of no value in itself, (as neither is any other means whatsoever,) yet as it leads to that end, the establishing anew the law of love in our hearts: and as, in the present state of things, it is the only means under heaven for effecting it, it is on that account an unspeakable blessing to man, and of unspeakable value before God.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 325-327.

SECTION V.

His Joy.

Christian joy is joy in obedience: joy in loving God and keeping his commandments. And yet not in keeping them as if we were thereby to fulfil the terms of the covenant of works; as if by any works or righteousness of ours we were to procure pardon and acceptance with God. Not so: we are already pardoned and accepted through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Not as if we were by our own obedience to procure life, life from the death of sin: this also we have already through the grace of God. Us "hath he quickened who were dead in sins;" and now we are "alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." But we rejoice in walking according to the covenant of grace, in holy love and happy obedience. We rejoice in knowing that, "being justified through his grace," we have "not received that grace of God in vain;" that God having freely (not for the sake of our willing or running, but through the blood of the Lamb) reconciled us to himself, we run, in the strength which he hath given

us, the way of his commandments. He hath "girded us with strength unto the war," and we gladly "fight the good fight of faith." We rejoice, through Him who liveth in our hearts by faith, to "lay hold of eternal life." This is our rejoicing, that as our "Father worketh hitherto," so (not by our own might or wisdom, but through the power of his Spirit, freely given in Christ Jesus) we also work the works of God. And may he work in us whatsoever is well-pleasing in his sight! To whom be the praise for ever and ever!—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 107.

SECTION VI.

His Peace.

ANOTHER fruit of this living faith is peace. For, "being justified by faith," having all our sins blotted out, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," Rom. v, 1. This indeed our Lord himself, the night before his death, solemnly bequeathed to all his followers: "Peace," saith he, "I leave with you;" (you who "believe in God," and "believe also in me;") "my peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," John xiv, 27. And again, "These things have I spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace," chap. xvi, 33. This is that "peace of God which passeth all understanding," that serenity of soul which it hath not entered into the heart of a natural man to conceive, and which it is not possible for even the spiritual man to utter. And it is a peace which all the powers of earth and hell are unable to take from him. Waves and storms beat upon it, but they shake it not; for it is founded upon a rock. It keepeth the hearts and minds of the children of God, at all times and in all places. Whether they are in ease or in pain, in sickness or health, in abundance or want, they are

happy in God. In every state they have learned to be content, yea, to give thanks unto God through Christ Jesus; being well assured that "whatsoever is, is best," because it is his will concerning them: so that in all the vicissitudes of life their "heart standeth fast, believing in the Lord."—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 156, 157.

SECTION VII.

His Meekness.

But who are the meek? Not those who grieve at nothing, because they know nothing; who are not discomposed at the evils that occur, because they discern not evil from good. Not those who are sheltered from the shocks of life by a stupid insensibility; who have, either by nature or art, the virtue of stocks and stones, and resent nothing, because they feel nothing. Brute philosophers are wholly unconcerned in this matter. Apathy is as far from meekness as from humanity. So that one would not easily conceive how any Christians of the purer ages, especially any of the fathers of the church, could confound these, and mistake one of the foulest errors of heathenism for a branch of true Christianity.

Nor does Christian meekness imply the being without zeal for God any more than it does ignorance or insensibility. No; it keeps clear of every extreme, whether in excess or defect. It does not destroy, but balance the affections, which the God of nature never designed should be rooted out by grace, but only brought and kept under due regulations. It poises the mind aright. It holds an even scale, with regard to anger, and sorrow, and fear; preserving the mean in every circumstance of life, and not declining either to the right hand or to the left.

Meekness, therefore, seems properly to relate to our-

selves : but it may be referred either to God or our neighbour. When this due composure of mind has reference to God, it is usually termed resignation ; a calm acquiescence in whatsoever is his will concerning us, even though it may not be pleasing to nature ; saying continually, " It is the Lord ; let him do what seemeth him good." When we consider it more strictly with regard to ourselves, we style it patience or contentedness. When it is exerted toward other men, then it is mildness to the good, and gentleness to the evil.

They who are truly meek can clearly discern what is evil : and they can also suffer it. They are sensible of every thing of this kind, but still meekness holds the reins. They are exceeding " zealous for the Lord of hosts ;" but their zeal is always guided by knowledge, and tempered, in every thought, and word, and work, with the love of man as well as the love of God. They do not desire to extinguish any of the passions which God has, for wise ends, implanted in their nature ; but they have the mastery of all : they hold them all in subjection, and employ them only in subservience to those ends. And thus even the harsher and more unpleasing passions are applicable to the noblest purposes ; even hatred, and anger, and fear, when engaged against sin, and regulated by faith and love, are as walls and bulwarks to the soul, so that the wicked one cannot approach to hurt it.

It is evident this divine temper is not only to abide, but to increase in us day by day. Occasions of exercising, and thereby increasing it, will never be wanting while we remain upon earth. " We have need of patience that after we have done [and suffered] the will of God, we may receive the promise." We have need of resignation, that we may in all circumstances say, " Not as I will, but as thou wilt." And we have need of " gentleness toward all men ;" but especially toward the evil and unthankful :

otherwise we shall be overcome of evil, instead of overcoming evil with good.

Nor does meekness restrain only the outward act, as the scribes and Pharisees taught of old, and the miserable teachers who are not taught of God will not fail to do in all ages. Our Lord guards against this, and shows the true extent of it in the following words: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment," Matt. v, 21, &c. "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire." *Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 188, 189.

SECTION VIII.

His Patience.

WHAT is *patience?* We do not now speak of a heathen virtue; neither of a natural indolence; but of a gracious temper wrought in the heart of a believer by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is a disposition to suffer whatever pleases God, in the manner, and for the time that pleases him. We thereby hold the middle way, neither ολιγωρεντες, *despising* our sufferings, *making little* of them, passing over them lightly, as if they were owing to chance, or second causes; nor, on the other hand, εκλυομενοι, *affected too much, unnerved, dissolved, sinking under them.* We may observe, the proper object of patience is suffering, either in body or mind. Patience does not imply the not *feeling* this: it is not apathy or insensibility. It is at the utmost distance from stoical stupidity; yea, at an equal distance from fretfulness or dejection. The patient believer is preserved from falling into either of these ex-

tremes by considering who is the author of all his suffering, even God his Father; what is the *motive* of his *giving us* to suffer: not so properly his justice as his love: and what is the *end* of it; our "profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness."

Very nearly related to patience is *meekness;* if it be not rather a species of it. For may it not be defined, Patience of injuries; particularly affronts, reproach, or unjust censure? This teaches not to return evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing. Our blessed Lord himself seems to place a peculiar value upon this temper. This he peculiarly calls us to "learn of him," if we would find rest for our souls.

But what may we understand by the *work of patience?* "Let patience have its perfect work." It seems to mean, let it have its full fruit or effect. And what is the fruit which the Spirit of God is accustomed to produce hereby in the heart of a believer? One immediate fruit of patience is peace: a sweet tranquillity of mind; a serenity of spirit which can never be found unless where patience reigns. And this peace often rises into joy. Even in the midst of various temptations, those that are enabled "in patience to possess their souls," can witness not only quietness of spirit, but triumph and exultation. This both

> "Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,
> And opens in each breast a little heaven."

How lively is the account which the apostle Peter gives, not only of the peace and joy, but of the hope and love which God works in those patient sufferers, "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation!" Indeed he appears herein to have an eye to this very passage of St. James: "Though ye are grieved for a season with manifold temptations, [the very word, ποικιλοις πειρασμιος,] that the trial of your faith [the same expression

which was used by St. James] may be found to praise, and honour, and glory, at the revelation of Jesus Christ; whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." See here the peace, the joy, and the love, which, through the mighty power of God, are the fruit or "work of patience."—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 219, 220.

SECTION IX.

His Hope.

One Scriptural mark of those who are born of God is hope. Thus St. Peter, speaking to all the children of God who were then scattered abroad, saith, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope," 1 Pet. i, 3. Ελπιδα ζωσαν, a *lively* or *living* hope, saith the apostle; because there is also a *dead* hope, as well as a dead faith; a hope which is not from God, but from the enemy of God and man; as evidently appears by its fruits; for, as it is the offspring of pride, so it is the parent of every evil word and work; whereas, every man that hath in him this living hope is "holy as he that calleth him is holy:" every man that can truly say to his brethren in Christ, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God,—and we shall see him as he is," "purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

This hope, (termed, in the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. x, 22, πληροφορια πιστεως, and elsewhere πληροφορα ελπιδος, chap. vi, 11; in our translation, "the full assurance of faith, and the full assurance of hope," expressions the best which our language could afford, although far weaker than those in the original,) as described in Scripture implies, first, The testimony of our own spirit, or conscience, that we walk "in simplicity and godly sincerity;" but

secondly and chiefly, The testimony of the Spirit of God "bearing witness with," or to "our spirit that we are the children of God," "and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

Let us well observe what is here taught us by God himself touching this glorious privilege of his children. Who is it that is here said to bear witness? Not our spirit only, but another; even the Spirit of God: he it is who "beareth witness with our spirit." What is it he beareth witness of? "That we are the children of God;" "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii, 16, 17; "if so be that we suffer with him," (if we deny ourselves, if we take up our cross daily, if we cheerfully endure persecution or reproach for his sake,) "that we may also be glorified together." And in whom doth the Spirit of God bear this witness? In all who are the children of God. By this very argument does the apostle prove, in the preceding verses, that they are so. "As many," saith he, "as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." It follows, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," chap. viii, 14–16.

The variation of the phrase in the 15th verse is worthy our observation. "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!" *Ye*, as many as are the sons of God, have, in virtue of your sonship, received that self-same Spirit of adoption whereby *we* cry, Abba, Father! *We*, the apostles, prophets, teachers, (for so the word may not improperly be understood,) *we*, through whom you have believed, the "ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." As *we* and *you* have one Lord, so we have one spirit: as we have one faith,

so we have one hope also. We and you are sealed with one "Spirit of promise," the earnest of *your* and of *our* inheritance: the same Spirit bearing witness with your and with our spirit, "that we are the children of God."

And thus is the scripture fulfilled, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." For it is easy to believe, that though sorrow may precede this witness of God's Spirit with our spirit; (indeed *must*, in some degree, while we groan under fear, and a sense of the wrath of God abiding on us;) yet, as soon as any man feeleth it in himself, his "sorrow is turned into joy." Whatsoever his pain may have been before, yet, as soon as that "hour is come, he remembereth the anguish no more for joy" that he is born of God. It may be many of *you* have now sorrow, because you are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel;" because you are conscious to yourselves that you have not this Spirit; that you are "without hope and without God in the world." But when the Comforter is come, "then your heart shall rejoice;" yea, "your joy shall be full," and "that joy no man taketh from you," John xvi, 22. "We joy in God," will ye say, "through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement;" "by whom we have access into this grace," this state of grace, of favour, or reconciliation with God, "wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," Rom. v, 2. "Ye," saith St. Peter, whom God hath "begotten again unto a lively hope, are kept by the power of God unto salvation: wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ: in whom, though now ye see him not, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," 1 Pet. i, 5, &c. Unspeakable indeed! It is not for the tongue of man to describe this joy in the Holy Ghost. It

is "the hidden manna which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it." But this we know, it not only remains, but overflows in the depth of affliction. "Are the consolations of God small" with his children, when all earthly comforts fail? Not so. But when sufferings most abound, the consolations of his Spirit doth much more abound; insomuch that the sons of God "laugh at destruction when it cometh;" at want, pain, hell, and the grave; as knowing Him who "hath the keys of death and hell," and will shortly "cast them into the bottomless pit;" as hearing even now the great voice out of heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away," Rev. xxi, 3, 4.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 157, 158.

CHAPTER XV.

OF CHRISTIAN DUTIES.

SECTION I.

Repentance.

THE repentance consequent upon justification is widely different from that which is antecedent to it. This implies no guilt, no sense of condemnation, no consciousness of the wrath of God. It does not suppose any doubt of the favour of God, or any "fear that hath torment." It is properly a conviction, wrought by the Holy Ghost, of the

sin which still *remains* in our heart: of the *φρονημα σαρκος the carnal mind*, which "does still *remain*, (as our church speaks,) even in them that are regenerate;" although it does no longer *reign;* it has not now dominion over them. It is a conviction of our proneness to evil, of a heart bent to backsliding, of the still continuing tendency of the flesh to lust against the Spirit. Sometimes, unless we continually watch and pray, it lusteth to pride, sometimes to anger, sometimes to love of the world, love of ease, love of honour, or love of pleasure more than of God. It is a conviction of the tendency of our heart to self-will, to atheism or idolatry, and, above all, to unbelief, whereby, in a thousand ways, and under a thousand pretences, we are ever departing, more or less, from the living God.

With this conviction of the sin remaining in our hearts there is joined a clear conviction of the sin remaining in our lives; still *cleaving* to all our words and actions. In the best of these we now discern a mixture of evil, either in the spirit, the matter, or the manner of them; something that could not endure the righteous judgment of God were he extreme to mark what is done amiss. Where we least suspected it, we find a taint of pride, or self-will, of unbelief or idolatry; so that we are now more ashamed of our best duties than formerly of our worst sins: and hence we cannot but feel that these are so far from having any thing meritorious in them, yea, so far from being able to stand in sight of the divine justice, that for those also we should be guilty before God, were it not for the blood of the covenant.

Experience shows that, together with the conviction of sin *remaining* in our hearts, and *cleaving* to all our words and actions; as well as the guilt which on account thereof we should incur, were we not continually sprinkled with the atoning blood; one thing more is implied in this repentance, viz. a conviction of our helplessness, of our

utter inability to think one good thought, or to form one good desire; and much more to speak one word aright, or to perform one good action, but through his free, almighty grace, first preventing us, and then accompanying us every moment.

"But what good works are those the practice of which you affirm to be necessary to sanctification?" First, all works of piety; such as public prayer, family prayer, and praying in our closet; receiving the supper of the Lord; searching the Scriptures, by hearing, reading, meditating; and using such a measure of fasting or abstinence as our bodily health allows.

Secondly, all works of mercy; whether they relate to the bodies or souls of men; such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, entertaining the stranger, visiting those that are in prison, or sick, or variously afflicted; such as the endeavouring to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the stupid sinner, to quicken the lukewarm, to confirm the wavering, to comfort the feeble-minded, to succour the tempted, or contribute in any manner to the saving of souls from death. This is the repentance, and these the "fruits meet for repentance," which are necessary to full sanctification. This is the way wherein God hath appointed his children to wait for complete salvation.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 388, 389.

SECTION II.

Prayer.

All who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in the way of prayer. This is the express direction of our Lord himself. In his sermon upon the mount, after explaining at large wherein religion consists, and describing the main branches of it, he adds, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be

opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened," Matt. vii, 7, 8. Here we are in the plainest manner directed to ask, in order to, or as a means of receiving; to seek, in order to find the grace of God, the pearl of great price; and to knock, to continue asking and seeking, if we would enter into his kingdom.

That no doubt might remain, our Lord labours this point in a more peculiar manner. He appeals to every man's own heart. "What man is there of you who, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven," the Father of angels and men, the Father of the spirits of all flesh, "give good things to them that ask him?" ver. 9–11. Or, as he expresses himself on another occasion, including all good things in one, "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke xi, 13. It should be particularly observed here, that the persons directed to ask had not then received the Holy Spirit: nevertheless our Lord directs them to use this means, and promises that it should be effectual; that upon asking they should receive the Holy Spirit from Him whose mercy is over all his works.

The absolute necessity of using this means, if we would receive any gift from God, yet farther appears from that remarkable passage which immediately precedes these words: "And he said unto them," whom he had just been teaching how to pray, "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and shall say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves: and he from within shall answer, Trouble me not; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet, because of his im-

portunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you," Luke xi, 5, 7, 8, 9, "Though he will not give him, because he is his friend, yet, because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." How could our blessed Lord more plainly declare, that we may receive of God, by this means, by importunately asking, what otherwise we should not receive at all?

"He spake also another parable to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint," till through this means they should receive of God whatsoever petition they asked of him. "There was in a city a judge which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of my adversary. And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest, by her continual coming she weary me," Luke xviii, 1–5. The application of this our Lord himself hath made: "Hear what the unjust judge saith!" Because she continues to ask, because she will take no denial, therefore I will avenge her. "And shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him? I tell you he will avenge them speedily," if they pray and faint not.

A direction equally full and express, to wait for the blessings of God in private prayer, together with a positive promise that, by this means, we shall obtain the request of our lips, he hath given us in these well-known words: "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly," Matt. vi, 6.

If it be possible for any direction to be more clear, it is that which God hath given us by the apostle with

regard to prayer of every kind, public or private, and the blessing annexed thereto. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally," (if they ask; otherwise "ye have not, because ye ask not," James iv, 2,) "and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him," chap. i, 5.

If it be objected, But this is no direction to unbelievers; to them who know not the pardoning grace of God: for the apostle adds, "But let him ask in faith;" otherwise "let him not think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." I answer, the meaning of the word *faith*, in this place, is fixed by the apostle himself, as if it were on purpose to obviate this objection, in the words immediately following: "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering," nothing *doubting*, μεδεν διακρινομενος: not doubting but God heareth his prayer, and will fulfil the desire of his heart.

The gross, blasphemous absurdity of supposing *faith* in this place to be taken in the full Christian meaning, appears hence: It is supposing the Holy Ghost to direct a man who knows he has not this faith (which is here termed *wisdom*) to ask it of God, with a positive promise that "it shall be given him;" and then immediately to subjoin, that it shall not be given him, unless he have it before he asks for it! But who can bear such a supposition? From this scripture, therefore, as well as those cited above, we must infer, that all who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in the way of prayer.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 139, 140.

"And when thou prayest," saith our Lord, "thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men." "Thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are." Hypocrisy, then, or insincerity, is the first thing we are to guard against in prayer. Beware not to speak what thou dost not mean. Prayer is the lifting up of the heart to God: all words of prayer without this

are mere hypocrisy. Whenever therefore thou attemptest to pray, see that it be thy one design to commune with God, to lift up thy heart to him, to pour out thy soul before him; not as the hypocrites, who love, or are wont "to pray standing in the synagogues," the exchange, or market-places, "and in the corners of the streets," wherever the most people are, "that they may be seen of men." This was the sole design, the motive and end, of the prayers which they there repeated. "Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." They are to expect none from your Father which is in heaven.

But it is not only the having an eye to the praise of men which cuts us off from any reward in heaven, which leaves us no room to expect the blessing of God upon our works, whether of piety or mercy. Purity of intention is equally destroyed by a view to any temporal reward whatever. If we repeat our prayers, if we attend the public worship of God, if we relieve the poor, with a view to gain or interest, it is not a whit more acceptable to God than if it were done with a view to praise. Any temporal view, any motive whatever on this side eternity, any design but that of promoting the glory of God, and the happiness of men for God's sake, makes every action, however fair it may appear to men, an abomination unto the Lord.

"But when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." There is a time when thou art openly to glorify God, to pray to and praise him in the great congregation. But when thou desirest more largely and more particularly to make thy requests known unto God, whether it be in the evening, or in the morning, or at noon-day, "enter into thy closet, and shut thy door." Use all the privacy thou canst. (Only leave it not undone, whether thou hast any closet, any privacy, or no. Pray to God, if it be pos-

sible, when none seeth but he; but, if otherwise, pray to God.) Thus "pray to thy Father which is in secret;" pour out all thy heart before him; "and thy Father which seeth in secret, he shall reward thee openly."

"But when ye pray," even in secret, "use not vain repetitions as the heathen do; *με βαττολογησητε.* Do not use abundance of words without any meaning. Say not the same thing over and over again; think not the fruit of your prayers depends on the length of them, like the heathens; for "they think they shall be heard for their much speaking."

The thing here reproved is not simply the length, any more than the shortness, of our prayers; but, First, length without meaning; speaking much, and meaning little or nothing; the using (not all repetitions; for our Lord himself prayed thrice, repeating the same words; but) vain repetitions, as the heathens did, reciting the names of their gods over and over, as they do among Christians, (vulgarly so called,) and not among the papists only, who say over and over the same string of prayers, without ever feeling what they speak;—Secondly, the thinking to be heard for our much speaking, the fancying God measures prayers by their length, and is best pleased with those which contain the most words, which sound the longest in his ears. These are such instances of superstition and folly as all who are named by the name of Christ should leave to the heathens—to them on whom the glorious light of the gospel hath never shined.

"Be not ye therefore like unto them." Ye who have tasted of the grace of God in Christ Jesus are thoroughly convinced "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." So that the end of your praying is not to inform God, as though he knew not your wants already, but rather to inform yourselves; to fix the sense of those wants more deeply in your hearts, and the

sense of your continual dependance on Him who only is able to supply all your wants. It is not so much to move God, who is always more ready to give than you to ask, as to move yourselves, that you may be willing and ready to receive the good things he has prepared for you.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 235, 236.

SECTION III.

Searching the Scriptures.

All who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in searching the Scriptures.

Our Lord's direction, with regard to the use of this means, is likewise plain and clear. "Search the Scriptures," saith he to the unbelieving Jews, "for they testify of me," John v, 39. And for this very end did he direct them to search the Scriptures, that they might believe in him.

The objection, "that this is not a command, but only an assertion that they did search the Scriptures," is shamelessly false. I desire those who urge it to let us know how a command can be more clearly expressed than in those terms, Ερευνατε τας γραφας? It is as peremptory as so many words can make it.

And what a blessing from God attends the use of this means appears from what is recorded concerning the Bereans, who, after hearing St. Paul, "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed"—found the grace of God in the way which he had ordained. Acts xvii, 11, 12.

It is probable, indeed, that in some of those who had "received the word with all readiness of mind," "faith came" (as the same apostle speaks) "by hearing," and was only confirmed by reading the Scriptures; but it was observed above that, under the general term of searching

the Scriptures, both hearing, reading, and meditating are contained.

And that this is a means whereby God not only gives, but also confirms and increases, true wisdom, we learn from the words of St. Paul to Timothy: "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. iii, 15. The same truth (namely, that this is the great means God has ordained for conveying his manifold grace to man) is delivered, in the fullest manner that can be conceived, in the words which immediately follow: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God;" consequently all Scripture is infallibly true; "and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;" to the end "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," ver. 16, 17.

It should be observed that this is spoken primarily and directly of the Scriptures which Timothy had known from a child; which must have been those of the Old Testament, for the New was not then wrote. How far, then, was St. Paul (though he was "not a whit behind the very chief of the apostles," nor, therefore, I presume, behind any man now upon earth) from making light of the Old Testament! Behold this, lest ye one day "wonder and perish," ye who make so small account of one half of the oracles of God! yea, and that half of which the Holy Ghost expressly declares that it is "profitable," as a means ordained of God, for this very thing, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;" to the end, "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Nor is this profitable only for the men of God, for those who walk already in the light of his countenance; but also for those who are yet in darkness, seeking Him whom

they know not. Thus St. Peter: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy," literally, "And we have the prophetic word more sure;" Και εχομεν βεβαιοτερον τον προφητικον λογον; confirmed by our being "eye-witnesses of his majesty," and "hearing the voice which came from the excellent glory;" unto which [prophetic word; so he styles the Holy Scriptures] "ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts," 2 Pet. i, 19. Let all, therefore, who desire that day to dawn upon their hearts wait for it in searching the Scriptures.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 140–142.

SECTION IV.

Partaking of the Lord's Supper.

All who desire an increase of the grace of God are to wait for it in partaking of the Lord's supper: for this also is a direction himself hath given. "The same night in which he was betrayed, he took bread, and brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body," that is, the sacred sign of my body: "This do in remembrance of me." "Likewise he took the cup, saying, This cup is the new testament," or covenant, in my blood; the sacred sign of that covenant; "this do ye in remembrance of me." "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come," 1 Cor. xi, 23, &c., ye openly exhibit the same, by these visible signs, before God, and angels, and men; ye manifest your solemn remembrance of his death till he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

Only let a man first examine himself, whether he understand the nature and design of this holy institution, and whether he really desire to be himself made conformable to the death of Christ; and so, nothing doubting, "let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup," ver. 28.

Here, then, the direction first given by our Lord is expressly repeated by the apostle. Let him eat; let him drink; (εσθιετω, πινετω, both in the imperative mood;) words not implying a bare permission only, but a clear, explicit command; a command to all those who either already are filled with peace and joy in believing, or can truly say, "The remembrance of our sins is grievous unto us; the burden of them is intolerable."

And that this is also an ordinary, stated means of receiving the grace of God, is evident from those words of the apostle which occur in the preceding chapter: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion [or *communication*] of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. x, 16. Is not the eating of that bread, and the drinking of that cup, the outward, visible means whereby God conveys into our souls all that spiritual grace, that righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which were purchased by the body of Christ once broken, and the blood of Christ once shed for us? Let all, therefore, who truly desire the grace of God, eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 142.

The first reason why it is the duty of every Christian so to do is, because it is a plain command of Christ. That this is his command appears from the words of the text: "Do this in remembrance of me," by which as the apostles were obliged to bless, break, and give the bread to all that joined with them in these holy things; so were all Christians obliged to receive those signs of Christ's body and blood. Here, therefore, the bread and wine are commanded to be received, in remembrance of his death, to the end of the world. Observe, too, that this command was given by our Lord, when he was just laying down his life for our sakes. They are, therefore, as it were, his dying words to all his followers.

A second reason why every Christian should do this as often as he can is, because the benefits of doing it are so great to all that do it in obedience to him, viz., the forgiveness of our past sins, the present strengthening and refreshing of our souls. In this world we are never free from temptations. Whatever way of life we are in, whatever our condition be, whether we are sick or well, in trouble or at ease, the enemies of our souls are watching to lead us into sin. And too often they prevail over us. Now when we are convinced of having sinned against God, what surer way have we of procuring pardon from him than the "showing forth the Lord's death," and beseeching him, for the sake of his Son's sufferings, to blot out all our sins?

The grace of God given herein confirms to us the pardon of our sins, and enables us to leave them. As our bodies are strengthened by bread and wine, so are our souls by these tokens of the body and the blood of Christ. This is the food of our souls: this gives strength to perform our duty, and leads us on to perfection. If, therefore, we have any regard for the plain command of Christ, if we desire the pardon of our sins, if we wish for strength to believe, to love and obey God, then we should neglect no opportunity of receiving the Lord's supper; then we must never turn our backs on the feast which our Lord has prepared for us. We must neglect no occasion which the good providence of God affords us for this purpose. This is the true rule: so often are we to receive as God gives us opportunity. Whoever, therefore, does not receive, but goes from the holy table, when all things are prepared, either does not understand his duty, or does not care for the dying command of his Saviour, the forgiveness of his sins, the strengthening of his soul, and the refreshing it with the hope of glory.

Let every one, therefore, who has either any desire to

please God, or any love of his soul, obey God, and consult the good of his own soul, by communicating every time he can; like the first Christians, with whom the Christian sacrifice was a constant part of the Lord's day service. And for several centuries they received it almost every day: four times a week always, and every saint's day besides. Accordingly, those that joined in the prayers of the faithful never failed to partake of the blessed sacrament. What opinion they had of any who turned his back upon it, we may learn from that ancient canon: "If any believer join in the prayers of the faithful, and go away without receiving the Lord's supper, let him be excommunicated, as bringing confusion into the church of God."

In order to understand the nature of the Lord's supper, it would be useful carefully to read over those passages in the gospel, and in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which speak of the institution of it. Hence we learn that the design of this sacrament is the continual remembrance of the death of Christ, by eating bread and drinking wine, which are the outward signs of the inward grace, the body and blood of Christ.

It is highly expedient for those who purpose to receive this, whenever their time will permit, to prepare themselves for this solemn ordinance by self-examination and prayer. But this is not absolutely necessary. And when we have not time for it, we should see that we have the habitual preparation which is absolutely necessary; and can never be dispensed with on any account, or any occasion whatever. This is, first, a full *purpose* of heart to keep all the commandments of God; and, secondly, a sincere *desire* to receive all his promises.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 350, 351.

SECTION V.

Self-Examination.

"Be serious and frequent in the examination of your heart and life. There are some duties like those parts of the body the want of which may be supplied by other parts; but the want of these nothing can supply. Every evening review your carriage through the day; what you have done or thought that was unbecoming your character: whether your heart has been instant upon religion, and indifferent to the world. Have a special care of two portions of time, namely, morning and evening: the morning to forethink what you have to do, and the evening to examine whether you have done what you ought.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 381.

SECTION VI.

God to be regarded as the End of our Works.

Have no end, no ultimate end, but God. Thus our Lord, "One thing is needful;" and if thine eye be singly fixed on this one thing, "thy whole body shall be full of light." Thus St. Paul: "This one thing I do; I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus." Thus St. James: "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." Thus St. John: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." The seeking happiness in what gratifies either the desire of the flesh, by agreeably striking upon the outward senses; the desire of the eye, of the imagination, by its novelty, greatness, or beauty; or the pride of life, whether by pomp, grandeur, power, or the usual consequence of them, applause and admiration,

"is not of the Father," cometh not from, neither is approved by, the Father of spirits, "but of the world:" it is the distinguishing mark of those who will not have him to reign over them.

Here, then, is the sum of the perfect law—this is the true circumcision of the heart. Let the spirit return to God that gave it, with the whole train of its affections. "Unto the place from whence all the rivers came," thither let them flow again. Other sacrifices from us he would not; but the living sacrifice of the heart he hath chosen. Let it be continually offered up to God through Christ, in flames of holy love. And let no creature be suffered to share with him: for he is a jealous God. His throne will he not divide with another: he will reign without a rival. Be no design, no desire admitted there, but what has him for its ultimate object. This is the way wherein those children of God once walked who, being dead, still speak to us: "Desire not to live, but to praise his name: let all your thoughts, words, and works tend to his glory. Set your heart firm on him, and on other things only as they are in and from him. Let your soul be filled with so entire a love of him that you may love nothing but for his sake." "Have a pure intention of heart, a steadfast regard to his glory in all your actions." "Fix your eye upon the blessed hope of your calling, and make all the things of the world minister unto it." For then, and not till then, is that "mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus:" when, in every motion of our heart, in every word of our tongue, in every work of our hands, we "pursue nothing but in relation to him, and in subordination to his pleasure:" when we, too, neither think, nor speak, nor act, to fulfil our "own will, but the will of Him that sent us:" when, whether we "eat, or drink, or whatever we do, we do all to the glory of God."—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 151-153.

SECTION VII.

Meekness and Love under Persecution.

The meekness and love we are to feel, the kindness we are to show to them who persecute us for righteousness' sake, our blessed Lord describes farther in the following verses. O that they were engraven upon our hearts! "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy," Matt. v, 43, &c. God, indeed, had said only the former part, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour;" the children of the devil had added the latter, "and hate thy enemy." "But I say unto you," 1. "Love your enemies:" see that you bear a tender good will to those who are most bitter of spirit against you—who wish you all manner of evil. 2. "Bless them that curse you." Are there any whose bitterness of spirit breaks forth in bitter words? who are continually cursing and reproaching you when you are present, and "saying all evil against you" when absent? So much the rather do you bless: in conversing with them, use all mildness and softness of language. Reprove them by repeating a better lesson before them, by showing them how they ought to have spoken. And in speaking of them, say all the good you can, without violating the rules of truth and justice. 3. "Do good to them that hate you." Let your actions show that you are as real in love as they in hatred. Return good for evil. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." 4. If you can do nothing more, at least "pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." You can never be disabled from doing this; nor can all their malice or violence hinder you. Pour out your souls to God, not only for those who did this once, but now repent; this is a little thing: "if thy brother, seven times a day, turn and say unto thee, I repent,"

Luke xvii, 3, that is, if, after ever so many relapses, he give thee reason to believe that he is really and thoroughly changed, then thou shalt forgive him so as to trust him, to put him in thy bosom, as if he had never sinned against thee at all; but pray for, wrestle with God for those that do not repent, that now despitefully use thee and persecute thee. Thus far forgive them, "not until seven times only, but until seventy times seven," Matt. xviii, 22. Whether they repent or no, yea, though they appear farther and farther from it, yet show them this instance of kindness, "that ye may be the children," that ye may approve yourselves the genuine children, "of your Father which is in heaven," who shows his goodness by giving such blessings as they are capable of even to his stubbornest enemies, "who maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" ver. 46—who pretend to no religion, whom ye yourselves acknowledge to be without God in the world. "And if ye salute," show kindness in word or deed to "your brethren," your friends or kinsfolk, "only, what do ye more than others"—than those who have no religion at all? "Do not even the publicans so?" Nay, but follow ye a better pattern than them. In patience, in long suffering, in mercy, in beneficence of every kind, to all, even to your bitterest persecutors, "be ye [Christians] perfect, [in kind, though not in degree,] even as your Father, which is in heaven is perfect," ver. 48.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 208, 209.

SECTION VIII.

Religion to be exemplified in the Conduct.

It is impossible for any that have it to conceal the religion of Jesus Christ. This our Lord makes plain beyond

all contradiction, by a twofold comparison: "Ye are the light of the world: a city set upon a hill cannot be hid." Ye Christians are "the light of the world," with regard both to your tempers and actions. Your holiness makes you as conspicuous as the sun in the midst of heaven. As ye cannot go out of the world, so neither can ye stay in it without appearing to all mankind. Ye may not flee from men; and while ye are among them, it is impossible to hide your lowliness and meekness, and those other dispositions whereby ye aspire to be perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Love cannot be hid any more than light; and least of all, when it shines forth in action, when ye exercise yourselves in the labour of love, in beneficence of every kind. As well may men think to hide a city as to hide a Christian; yea, as well may they conceal a city set upon a hill as a holy, zealous, active lover of God and man.

It is true, men who love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil will take all possible pains to prove that the light which is in you is darkness. They will say evil, all manner of evil, falsely of the good which is in you; they will lay to your charge that which is farthest from your thoughts, which is the very reverse of all you are and all you do. And your patient continuing in well doing, your meek suffering all things for the Lord's sake, your calm, humble joy in the midst of persecution, your unwearied labour to overcome evil with good, will make you still more visible and conspicuous than ye were before.

So impossible it is to keep our religion from being seen, unless we cast it away; so vain is the thought of hiding the light, unless by putting it out! Sure it is, that a secret, unobserved religion, cannot be the religion of Jesus Christ. Whatever religion can be concealed is not Christianity. If a Christian could be hid, he could not be compared to

a city set upon a hill; to the light of the world, the sun shining from heaven, and seen by all the world below. Never, therefore, let it enter into the heart of him whom God hath renewed in the spirit of his mind to hide that light, to keep his religion to himself, especially considering it is not only impossible to conceal true Christianity, but likewise absolutely contrary to the design of the great Author of it.

This plainly appears from the following words: "Neither do men light a candle to put it under a bushel." As if he had said, As men do not light a candle only to cover and conceal it, so neither does God enlighten any soul with his glorious knowledge and love to have it covered or concealed, either by prudence, falsely so called, or shame, or voluntary humility; to have it hid either in a desert, or in the world; either by avoiding men, or in conversing with them. "But they put it on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house." In like manner, it is the design of God that every Christian should be in an open point of view, that he may give light to all around, that he may visibly express the religion of Jesus Christ.

Thus hath God in all ages spoken to the world, not only by precept, but by example also. He hath "not left himself without witness" in any nation where the sound of the gospel hath gone forth, without a few who have testified his truth by their lives as well as their words. These have been "as lights shining in a dark place." And from time to time they have been the means of enlightening some, of preserving a remnant, a little seed which was "counted unto the Lord for a generation." They have led a few poor sheep out of the darkness of the world, and guided their feet into the way of peace.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 215, 216.

SECTION IX.

Self-denial and taking up the Cross.

But what is self-denial? Wherein are we to deny ourselves? And whence does the necessity of this arise? I answer, The will of God is the supreme, unalterable rule for every intelligent creature, equally binding every angel in heaven and every man upon earth. Nor can it be otherwise. This is the natural, necessary result of the relation between creatures and their Creator. But if the will of God be our one rule of action in every thing, great and small, it follows, by undeniable consequence, that we are not to do our own will in any thing. Here, therefore, we see at once the nature, with the ground and reason, of self-denial. We see the nature of self-denial: it is the denying or refusing to follow our own will, from a conviction that the will of God is the only rule of action to us. And we see the reason thereof, because we are creatures, because "it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves."

This reason for self-denial must hold, even with regard to the angels of God in heaven, and with regard to man innocent and holy, as he came out of the hands of his Creator. But a farther reason for it arises from the condition wherein all men are since the fall. We are all now "shapen in wickedness, and in sin did our mother conceive us." Our nature is altogether corrupt, in every power and faculty. And our will, depraved equally with the rest, is wholly bent to indulge our natural corruption. On the other hand, it is the will of God that we resist and counteract that corruption, not at some times, or in some things only, but at all times and in all things. Here, therefore, is a farther ground for constant and universal self-denial.

To illustrate this a little farther. The will of God is a path leading straight to God. The will of man, which once ran parallel with it, is now another path, not only different from it, but, in our present state, directly contrary to it: it leads from God. If, therefore, we walk in the one, we must necessarily quit the other. We cannot walk in both. Indeed, a man *of faint heart and feeble hands* may *go in two ways*, one after the other. But he cannot walk in two ways at the same time. He cannot, at one and the same time, follow his own will, and follow the will of God: he must choose the one, or the other—denying God's will to follow his own, or denying himself to follow the will of God.

Now it is undoubtedly pleasing, for the time, to follow our own will by indulging, in any instance that offers, the corruption of our nature; but by following it in any thing, we so far strengthen the perverseness of our will; and by indulging it, we continually increase the corruption of our nature. So, by the food which is agreeable to the palate, we often increase a bodily disease: it gratifies the taste, but it inflames the disorder; it brings pleasure, but it also brings death.

On the whole, then, to deny ourselves is to deny our own will where it does not fall in with the will of God; and that, however pleasing it may be. It is to deny ourselves any pleasure which does not spring from and lead to God: that is, in effect, to refuse going out of our way, though into a pleasant, flowery path; to refuse what we know to be deadly poison, though agreeable to the taste. *Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 428, 429.

The "taking up" differs a little from "bearing the cross." We are then properly said to "bear our cross" when we endure what is laid upon us without our choice with meekness and resignation.

Whereas we do not properly "take up our cross" but

when we voluntarily suffer what is in our power to avoid; when we willingly embrace the will of God, though contrary to our own; when we choose what is painful, because it is the will of our wise and gracious Creator.

And thus it behooves every disciple of Christ to take up as well as to bear his cross. Indeed, in one sense it is not *his* alone: it is common to him and many others, seeing there is no temptation befalls any man, *ει μη ανθροπινος*, "but such as is common to men," such as is incident and adapted to their common nature and situation in the present world. But, in another sense, as it is considered with all its circumstances, it is his, peculiar to himself; it is prepared of God for him; it is given by God to him as a token of his love. And if he receives it as such, and, after using such means to remove the pressure as Christian wisdom directs, lies as clay in the potter's hand; it is disposed and ordered by God for his good, both with regard to the quality of it, and in respect to its quantity and degree, its duration and every other circumstance.

In all this we may easily conceive our blessed Lord to act as the physician of our souls, not merely "for his [own] pleasure, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness." If, in searching our wounds, he puts us to pain, it is only in order to heal them. He cuts away what is putrefied or unsound in order to preserve the sound part. And if we freely choose the loss of a limb rather than the whole body should perish, how much more should we choose, figuratively, to cut off a right hand rather than the whole soul should be cast into hell!

We see plainly, then, both the nature and ground of taking up our cross. It does not imply the *disciplining ourselves* (as some speak;) the literally tearing our own flesh; the wearing hair-cloth, or iron girdles, or any thing else that would impair our bodily health, (although we know not what allowance God may make for those who

act thus through involuntary ignorance;) but the embracing the will of God, though contrary to our own; the choosing wholesome, though bitter medicines; the freely accepting temporary pain, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, when it is either essentially or accidentally necessary to eternal pleasure.—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 430.

SECTION X.

Obedience to Parents.

It has been a subject of controversy for many years whether there are any innate principles in the mind of man. But it is allowed, on all hands, if there be any practical principles naturally implanted in the soul, that we ought to honour our parents will claim this character almost before any other. It is enumerated among those universal principles by the most ancient authors, and is undoubtedly found even among most savages in the most barbarous nations. We may trace it through all the extent of Europe and Asia, through the wilds of Africa and the forests of America. And it is not less, but more observable in the most civilized nations. So it was, first in the eastern parts of the world, which were for so many ages the seat of empire, of learning and politeness, as well as of religion. So it was afterward, in all the Grecian states, and throughout the whole Roman empire. In this respect it is plain, they that "have not the [written] law are a law unto themselves," showing "the work [the substance] of the law" to be "written in their hearts."

And wherever God has revealed his will to man, this law has been a part of that revelation. It has been herein considerably opened afresh, enlarged, and enforced in the strongest manner. In the Jewish revelation the notorious breakers thereof were punishable with death. And this was one of the laws which our blessed Lord did not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Accordingly, he severely reproved

the scribes and Pharisees for making it void through their traditions, clearly showing that the obligation thereof extended to all ages. It is the substance of this which St. Paul delivers to the Ephesians, (chap. vi, 1,) "Children, obey your parents in the Lord;" and again in these words to the Colossians, "Children, obey your parents in all things."

It is observable that the apostle enforces this duty by a threefold encouragement: First, to the Ephesians he adds, "For this is right:" it is an instance of justice as well as mercy. It is no more than their due; it is what we owe to them for the very being which we have received from them. Secondly, "This is acceptable to the Lord:" it is peculiarly pleasing to the great Father of men and angels that we should pay honour and obedience to the fathers of our flesh. Thirdly, It is "the first commandment with promise:" the first to the performance whereof a peculiar promise is annexed; "that it may be well with thee, and that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This promise has been generally understood to include health and temporal blessings, as well as long life. And we have seen innumerable proofs that it belongs to the Christian as well as the Jewish dispensation: many remarkable instances of its accomplishment occur even at this day.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 316, 317.

SECTION XI.

Bigotry to be guarded against.

It is certain, so long as we know but *in part*, that all men will not see all things alike. It is an unavoidable consequence of the present weakness and shortness of human understanding, that several men will be of several minds in religion as well as in common life. So it has been from the beginning of the world, and so it will be "till the restitution of all things."

Nay, farther: although every man necessarily believes that every particular opinion which he holds is true, (for to believe any opinion is not true is the same thing as not to hold it,) yet can no man be assured that all his own opinions, taken together, are true. Nay, every thinking man is assured they are not; seeing *Humanum est errare et nescire:* To be ignorant of many things, and to mistake in some, is the necessary condition of humanity. This, therefore, he is sensible is his own case. He knows, in the general, that he himself is mistaken; although in what particulars he mistakes, he does not, perhaps he cannot know.

I say, perhaps he cannot know; for who can tell how far invincible ignorance may extend? or (what comes to the same thing) invincible prejudice? which is often so fixed in tender minds, that it is afterward impossible to tear up what has taken so deep a root. And who can say, unless he knew every circumstance attending it, how far any mistake is culpable? seeing all guilt must suppose some concurrence of the will, of which He only can judge who searcheth the heart.

Every wise man, therefore, will allow others the same liberty of thinking which he desires they should allow him; and will no more insist on their embracing his opinions than he would have them to insist on his embracing theirs. He bears with those who differ from him, and only asks him with whom he desires to unite in love that single question, "Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?"—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 348.

I need add but one caution [more:] think not the bigotry of another is any excuse for your own. It is not impossible that one who casts out devils himself may yet forbid you so to do. You may observe this is the very case mentioned in the text. The apostles forbade another to do what they did themselves. But beware of retorting.

It is not your part to return evil for evil. Another's not observing the direction of our Lord is no reason why you should neglect it. Nay, but let him have all the bigotry to himself. If he forbid *you*, do not you forbid *him*. Rather labour, and watch, and pray the more to confirm your love toward him. If he speak all manner of evil of *you*, speak all manner of good (that is true) of *him*. Imitate herein that glorious saying of a great man, (O that he had always breathed the same spirit!) "Let Luther call me a hundred devils; I will still reverence him as a messenger of God."—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 346.

SECTION XII.

Worldly Care to be avoided.

"Therefore take no thought for the morrow." Not only take ye no thought how to lay up treasures on earth, how to increase in worldly substance; take no thought how to procure more food than you can eat, or more raiment than you can put on, or more money than is required from day to day for the plain, reasonable purposes of life; but take no uneasy thought, even concerning those things which are absolutely needful for the body. Do not trouble yourself now with thinking what you shall do at a season which is yet afar off. Perhaps that season will never come, or it will be no concern of yours. Before then you will have passed through all the waves, and be landed in eternity. All those distant views do not belong to you, who are but a creature of a day. Nay, what have you to do with the morrow, more strictly speaking? Why should you perplex yourself without need? God provides for you to-day what is needful to sustain the life which he hath given you. It is enough: give yourself up into his hands; if you live another day, he will provide for that also.

Above all, do not make the care of future things a pretence for neglecting present duty. This is the most fatal way of "taking thought for the morrow." And how common is it among men! Many, if we exhort them to keep a conscience void of offence, to abstain from what they are convinced is evil, do not scruple to reply, "How then must we live? Must we not take care of ourselves and of our families?" And this they imagine to be a sufficient reason for continuing in known, wilful sin. They say, and perhaps think, they would serve God now were it not that they should, by and by, lose their bread. They would prepare for eternity; but they are afraid of wanting the necessaries of life. So they serve the devil for a morsel of bread; they rush into hell for fear of want; they throw away their poor souls, lest they should, some time or other, fall short of what is needful for their bodies!

It is not strange that they who thus take the matter out of God's hand should be so often disappointed of the very things they seek; that while they throw away heaven to secure the things of earth, they lose the one, but do not gain the other. The jealous God, in the wise course of his providence, frequently suffers this: so that they who will not cast their care on God, who, taking thought for temporal things, have little concern for things eternal, lose the very portion which they have chosen. There is a visible blast on all their undertakings; whatsoever they do, it doth not prosper; insomuch that, after they have forsaken God for the world, they lose what they sought, as well as what they sought not: they fall short of the kingdom of God and his righteousness, nor yet are other things added unto them.

It is possible to take thought in a wrong manner, even with regard to spiritual things; to be so careful about what may be by and by as to neglect what is now required at our hands. How insensibly do we slide into this, if we

are not continually watching unto prayer? How easily are we carried away, in a kind of waking dream, projecting distant schemes, and drawing fine scenes in our own imagination! We think what good we will do when we are in such a place, or when such a time is come! How useful we will be, how plenteous in good works, when we are easier in our circumstances! How earnestly we will serve God when once such a hinderance is out of the way!

Or perhaps you are now in heaviness of soul: God, as it were, hides his face from you. You see little of the light of his countenance: you cannot taste his redeeming love. In such a temper of mind how natural is it to say, "O how will I praise God when the light of his countenance shall be again lifted up upon my soul! How will I exhort others to praise him when his love is again shed abroad in my heart! Then I will do thus and thus: I will speak for God in all places; I will not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Then I will redeem the time. I will use to the uttermost every talent I have received." Do not believe thyself. Thou wilt not do it then, unless thou doest it now. "He that is faithful in that which is little," of whatsoever kind it be, whether it be worldly substance, or the fear or love of God, "will be faithful in that which is much." But if thou now hidest one talent in the earth, thou wilt then hide five: that is, if ever they are given; but there is small reason to expect they ever will. Indeed, "unto him that hath," that is, uses what he hath, "shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly. But from him that hath not," that is, uses not the grace which he hath already received, whether in a larger or smaller degree, "shall be taken away even that which he hath."

And take no thought for the temptations of to-morrow. This also is a dangerous snare. Think not, "When such a temptation comes, what shall I do? how shall I stand?

I feel I have not power to resist; I am not able to conquer that enemy." Most true: you have not now the power which you do not now stand in need of. You are not able at this time to conquer that enemy, and at this time he does not assault you. With the grace you have now you could not withstand the temptations which you have not. But when the temptation comes, the grace will come. In greater trials you will have greater strength. When sufferings abound, the consolations of God will, in the same proportion, abound also. So that in every situation the grace of God will be sufficient for you. He doth not suffer you "to be tempted" to-day "above that ye are able to bear;" and "in every temptation he will make a way to escape." "As thy days, so thy strength shall be."

"Let the morrow," therefore, "take thought for the things of itself;" that is, when the morrow comes, then think of it. Live thou to-day. Be it thy earnest care to improve the present hour. This is your own, and it is your all. The past is as nothing, as though it had never been. The future is nothing to you; it is not yours; perhaps it never will be. There is no depending on what is yet to come; for you "know not what a day may bring forth." Therefore live to-day; lose not an hour; use this moment, for it is your portion. "Who knoweth the things which have been before him, or which shall be after him under the sun?" The generations that were from the beginning of the world, where are they now? Fled away, forgotten. They were; they lived their day; they were shook off the earth as leaves off their trees; they mouldered away into common dust! Another and another race succeeded; then they "followed the generation of their fathers, and shall never more see the light." Now is thy turn upon the earth. "Rejoice, O young man, in the days of thy youth!" Enjoy the very, very now, by enjoying Him "whose years fail not." Now let thine eye be singly

fixed on Him "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning!" Now give him thy heart; now stay thyself on him; now be thou holy, as he is holy! Now lay hold on the blessed opportunity of doing his acceptable and perfect will! Now "rejoice to suffer the loss of all things, so thou mayest win Christ!"

Gladly suffer to-day, for his name's sake, whatsoever he permits this day to come upon thee. But look not at the sufferings of to-morrow. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Evil it is, speaking after the manner of men, whether it be reproach or want, pain or sickness; but in the language of God all is blessing: it is a precious balm, prepared by the wisdom of God, and variously dispensed among his children, according to the various sicknesses of their souls. And he gives in one day sufficient for that day, proportioned to the want and strength of the patient. If, therefore, thou snatchest to-day what belongs to thee to-morrow; if thou addest this to what is given thee already, it will be more than thou canst bear: this is the way not to heal, but to destroy thy own soul. Take, therefore, just as much as he gives thee to-day; to-day do and suffer his will! to-day give up thyself, thy body, soul, and spirit to God, through Christ Jesus; desiring nothing but that God may be glorified in all thou art, all thou doest, all thou sufferest; seeking nothing but to know God, and his Son Jesus Christ, through the eternal Spirit; pursuing nothing but to love him, to serve him, and to enjoy him at this hour, and to all eternity!—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 275–278.

SECTION XIII.

Evil Speaking to be guarded against.

"Speak evil of no man," says the great apostle: as plain a command as, "Thou shalt do no murder." But

who, even among Christians, regards this command? Yea, how few are there that so much as understand it? What is evil speaking? It is not, as some suppose, the same with lying or slandering. All a man says may be as true as the Bible; and yet the saying of it is evil speaking. For evil speaking is neither more nor less than speaking evil of an absent person; relating something evil which was really done or said by one that is not present when it is related. Suppose, having seen a man drunk, or heard him curse or swear, I tell this when he is absent; it is evil speaking. In our language this is also by an extremely proper name termed backbiting. Nor is there any material difference between this and what we usually style tale-bearing. If the tale be delivered in a soft and quiet manner, (perhaps with expressions of good will to the person, and of hope that things may not be quite so bad,) then we call it whispering. But in whatever manner it be done, the thing is the same; the same in substance, if not in circumstance. Still it is evil speaking; still this command, "Speak evil of no man," is trampled under foot; if we relate to another the fault of a third person when he is not present to answer for himself.

And how extremely common is this sin among all orders and degrees of men! How do high and low, rich and poor, wise and foolish, learned and unlearned, run into it continually! Persons who differ from each other in all things else nevertheless agree in this. How few are there that can testify before God, "I am clear in this matter; I have always set a watch before my mouth, and kept the door of my lips?" What conversation do you hear of any considerable length, whereof evil speaking is not one ingredient? And that even among persons who, in the general, have the fear of God before their eyes, and do really desire to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man.

And the very commonness of this sin makes it difficult to be avoided. As we are encompassed with it on every side, so, if we are not deeply sensible of the danger, and continually guarding against it, we are liable to be carried away by the torrent. In this instance, almost the whole of mankind is, as it were, in a conspiracy against us. And their example steals upon us, we know not how; so that we insensibly slide into the imitation of it. Besides, it is recommended from within, as well as from without. There is scarce any wrong temper in the mind of man which may not be occasionally gratified by it, and consequently incline us to it. It gratifies our pride to relate those faults of others whereof we think ourselves not to be guilty. Anger, resentment, and all unkind tempers are indulged by speaking against those with whom we are displeased; and in many cases, by reciting the sins of their neighbours, men indulge their own foolish and hurtful desires.

Evil speaking is the more difficult to be avoided, because it frequently attacks us in disguise. We speak thus out of a noble, generous, (it is well if we do not say,) holy indignation against these vile creatures! We commit sin from mere hatred of sin! we serve the devil out of pure zeal for God! It is merely in order to punish the wicked that we run into this wickedness. "So do the passions" (as one speaks) "all justify themselves," and palm sin upon us under the veil of holiness!

But is there no way to avoid the snare? Unquestionably there is. Our blessed Lord has marked out a plain way for his followers, in the words above recited. None who warily and steadily walk in his path will ever fall into evil speaking. This rule is either an infallible preventive, or a certain cure of it. In the preceding verses our Lord had said, "Wo to the world because of offences:" unspeakable misery will arise in the world from this baleful fountain. (*Offences* are all things whereby any one is

turned out of, or hindered in, the ways of God.) "For it must be that offences come:" such is the nature of things; such the wickedness, folly, and weakness of mankind; "But wo to that man," miserable is that man, "by whom the offence cometh." "Wherefore if thy hand, thy foot, thine eye, cause thee to offend:" if the most dear enjoyment, the most beloved and useful person, turn thee out of, or hinder thee in, the way, "pluck it out," cut them off, and cast them from thee. But how can we avoid giving offence to some, and being offended at others? Especially, suppose they are quite in the wrong, and we see it with our own eyes? Our Lord here teaches us how: he lays down a sure method of avoiding offences and evil speaking together. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him of his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 433–435.

SECTION XIV.

Right Use of Money.

In order to see the ground and reason of this, consider, when the Possessor of heaven and earth brought you into being, and placed you in this world, he placed you here not as a proprietor, but a steward. As such he intrusted you for a season with goods of various kinds; but the sole property of these rests in him, nor can ever be alienated from him. As you yourself are not your own, but his, such is, likewise, all that you enjoy. Such is your soul and your body, not your own, but God's. And so is

your substance in particular. And he has told you in the most clear and express terms how you are to employ it for him, in such a manner that it may be all a holy sacrifice, acceptable through Christ Jesus. And this light, easy service he hath promised to reward with an eternal weight of glory.

The directions which God has given us touching the use of our worldly substance may be comprised in the following particulars. If you desire to be a faithful and a wise steward, out of that portion of your Lord's goods which he has for the present lodged in your hands, but with the right of resuming whenever it pleases him, first, provide things needful for yourself: food to eat, raiment to put on, whatever nature moderately requires for preserving the body in health and strength. Secondly, provide these for your wife, your children, your servants, or any others who pertain to your household. If, when this is done, there be an overplus left, then "do good to them that are of the household of faith." If there be an overplus still, "as you have opportunity, do good unto all men." In so doing, you give all you can; nay, in a sound sense, all you have; for all that is laid out in this manner is really given to God. You "render unto God the things that are God's," not only by what you give to the poor, but also by that which you expend in providing things needful for yourself and your household.

If, then, a doubt should at any time arise in your mind concerning what you are going to expend, either on yourself or any part of your family, you have an easy way to remove it. Calmly and seriously inquire, 1. In expending this, am I acting according to my character? Am I acting herein, not as a proprietor, but as a steward of my Lord's goods? 2. Am I doing this in obedience to his word? In what scripture does he require me so to do? 3. Can I offer up this action, this expense, as a sacrifice

to God, through Jesus Christ? 4. Have I reason to believe that for this very work I shall have a reward at the resurrection of the just? You will seldom need any thing more to remove any doubt which arises on this head; but by this fourfold consideration you will receive clear light as to the way wherein you should go.

If any doubt still remain, you may farther examine yourself by prayer, according to those heads of inquiry. Try whether you can say to the Searcher of hearts, your conscience not condemning you, "Lord, thou seest I am going to expend this sum on that food, apparel, furniture. And thou knowest I act therein with a single eye, as a steward of thy goods, expending this portion of them thus, in pursuance of the design thou hadst in intrusting me with them. Thou knowest I do this in obedience to thy word, as thou commandest, and because thou commandest it. Let this, I beseech thee, be a holy sacrifice, acceptable through Jesus Christ! And give me a witness in myself, that for this labour of love I shall have a recompense when thou rewardest every man according to his works." Now if your conscience bear you witness in the Holy Ghost that this prayer is well pleasing to God, then have you no reason to doubt but that expense is right and good, and such as will never make you ashamed.—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 446, 447.

CHAPTER XVI.

MEANS OF GRACE.

SECTION I.

Appointed by God.

God hath in Scripture ordained prayer, reading or hearing, and the receiving the Lord's supper, as the ordinary means of conveying his grace to man. And, first, prayer: For thus saith the Lord, *Ask, and it shall be given you. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God.* Here God plainly ordains prayer as the means of receiving whatsoever grace we want, particularly that wisdom from above which is the chief fruit of the grace of God.

Here likewise God commands all to pray who desire to receive any grace from him. Here is no restriction as to believers or unbelievers, but least of all as to unbelievers; for such doubtless were most of those to whom he said, "Ask, and it shall be given you."

We know, indeed, that the prayer of an unbeliever is full of sin. Yet let him remember that which is written of one who could not then believe, for he had not so much as heard the gospel: *Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.*

To search, that is, read and hear the Holy Scriptures, is a command of God. This command is given to all, believers or unbelievers. It is commanded or ordained as a means of grace, a means of conveying the grace of God to all, whether unbelievers, such as those to whom he first gave this command, and those to whom *faith cometh by hearing*, or believers, who by experience know that *all Scripture is profitable*, or a means to this end, *that*

the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.

In later times many have affirmed that the Lord's supper is not a converting, but a confirming ordinance.

And among us it has been diligently taught that none but those who are converted, who have received the Holy Ghost, who are believers in the full sense, ought to communicate.

The falsehood of this other assertion appears both from Scripture precept and example. Our Lord commanded those very men who were then unconverted, who had not yet received the Holy Ghost, who, in the full sense of the word, were not believers, to *do this in remembrance of him.* Here the precept is clear. And to these he delivered the elements with his own hands. Here is example equally indisputable.

The Lord's supper was ordained by God to be a mean of conveying to men either preventing, or justifying, or sanctifying grace, according to their several necessities. The persons for whom it was ordained are all those who know and feel that they want the grace of God, either to restrain them from sin, or to show their sins forgiven, or to *renew their souls in the image of God.* Inasmuch as we come to his table, not to give him any thing, but to receive whatsoever he sees best for us, there is no previous preparation indispensably necessary, but a desire to receive whatsoever he pleases to give. No fitness is required at the time of communicating, but a sense of our state, of our utter sinfulness and helplessness: every one who knows he is fit for hell being just fit to come to Christ in this as well as all other ways of his appointment.—*Works*, vol. iii, pp. 188, 189.

SECTION II.

How to be used.

Before you use any means, let it be deeply impressed on your soul, There is no *power* in this. It is in itself a poor, dead, empty thing: separate from God, it is a dry leaf, a shadow. Neither is there any *merit* in my using this; nothing intrinsically pleasing to God; nothing whereby I deserve any favour at his hands, no, not a drop of water to cool my tongne. But because God bids, therefore I do; because he directs me to wait in this way, therefore here I wait for his free mercy, whereof cometh my salvation.

Settle this in your heart, that the *opus operatum*, the mere *work done*, profiteth nothing; that there is no *power* to save, but in the Spirit of God—no *merit*, but in the blood of Christ; that consequently even what God ordains conveys no grace to the soul, if you trust not in him alone. On the other hand, he that does truly trust in him cannot fall short of the grace of God, even though he were cut off from every outward ordinance, though he were shut up in the centre of the earth.

In using all means, seek God alone. In and through every outward thing look singly to the *power* of his Spirit and the *merits* of his Son. Beware you do not stick in the *work* itself; if you do, it is all lost labour. Nothing short of God can satisfy your soul. Therefore eye him in all, through all, and above all.

Remember also to use all means *as means;* as ordained, not for their own sake, but in order to the renewal of your soul in righteousness and true holiness. If, therefore, they actually tend to this, well; but if not, they are dung and dross.

After you have used any of these, take care how you value yourself thereon: how you congratulate yourself as

having done some great thing. This is turning all into poison. Think, "If God was not there, what does this avail? Have I not been adding sin to sin? How long? O Lord, save, or I perish! O lay not this sin to my charge!" If God was there, if his love flowed into your heart, you have forgot, as it were, the outward work. You see, you know, you feel, God is all in all! Be abased! Sink down before him! Give him all the praise. "Let God in all things be glorified through Christ Jesus." Let all your bones cry out, "My song shall be always of the loving kindness of the Lord: with my mouth will I ever be telling of thy truth, from one generation to another!"—*Sermons*, vol. i, p. 146.

SECTION III.

Of Temptations.

For what ends, then, does God permit heaviness to befall so many of his children? The apostle gives us a plain and direct answer to this important question: "That the trial of their faith, which is much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the revelation of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. i, 7. There may be an allusion to this in that well-known passage of the fourth chapter, (although it primarily relates to quite another thing, as has been already observed:) "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, but rejoice that ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may likewise rejoice with exceeding great joy," ver. 12, &c.

Hence we learn that the first and great end of God's permitting the temptations which bring heaviness on his children is the trial of their faith, which is tried by these even as gold by the fire. Now we know gold tried in the

fire is purified thereby, is separated from its dross. And so is faith in the fire of temptation: the more it is tried, the more it is purified; yea, and not only purified, but also strengthened, confirmed, increased abundantly, by so many more proofs of the wisdom and power, the love and faithfulness of God. This, then, to increase our faith, is one gracious end of God's permitting those manifold temptations.

They serve to try, to purify, to confirm, and increase that living hope also whereunto "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath begotten us again of his abundant mercy." Indeed, our hope cannot but increase in the same proportion with our faith. On this foundation it stands: believing in his name, living by faith in the Son of God, we hope for, we have a confident expectation of, the glory which shall be revealed; and, consequently, whatever strengthens our faith increases our hope also. At the same time it increases our joy in the Lord, which cannot but attend a hope full of immortality. In this view the apostle exhorts believers in the other chapter: "Rejoice that ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ." On this very account "happy are you; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you:" and hereby ye are enabled, even in the midst of sufferings, to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

They rejoice the more, because the trials which increase their faith and hope increase their love also, both their gratitude to God for all his mercies, and their good will to all mankind. Accordingly, the more deeply sensible they are of the loving kindness of God their Saviour, the more is their heart inflamed with love to Him who "first loved us." The clearer and stronger evidence they have of the glory that shall be revealed, the more do they love Him who hath purchased it for them, and "given them the earnest [thereof] in their hearts." And this, the

increase of their love, is another end of the temptations permitted to come upon them.

Yet another is, their advance in holiness, holiness of heart and holiness of conversation: the latter naturally resulting from the former, for a good tree will bring forth good fruit. And all inward holiness is the immediate fruit of the faith that worketh by love. By this the blessed Spirit purifies the heart from pride, self-will, passion; from love of the world, from foolish and hurtful desires, from vile and vain affections. Besides that, sanctified afflictions have, through the grace of God, an immediate and direct tendency to holiness. Through the operation of his Spirit, they humble more and more, and abase the soul before God. They calm and meeken our turbulent spirit, tame the fierceness of our nature, soften our obstinacy and self-will, crucify us to the world, and bring us to expect all our strength from, and to seek all our happiness in God.

And all these terminate in that great end, that our faith, hope, love, and holiness "may be found [if it doth not yet appear] unto praise, [from God himself,] and honour, [from men and angels,] and glory," assigned by the great Judge to all that have endured unto the end. And this will be assigned in that awful day to every man "according to his works;" according to the work which God had wrought in his heart, and the outward works which he has wrought for God; and likewise according to what he had suffered: so that all these trials are unspeakable gain. So many ways do these "light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!"

Add to this the advantage which others may receive by seeing our behaviour under affliction. We find, by experience, example frequently makes a deeper impression upon us than precept. And what examples have a stronger

influence, not only on those who are partakers of like precious faith, but even on them who have not known God, than that of a soul calm and serene in the midst of storms; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; meekly accepting whatever is the will of God, however grievous it may be to nature; saying, in sickness and pain, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" in loss or want, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!"—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 423, 424. See also chap. xv.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF A FUTURE STATE.

SECTION I.

The last Judgment.

But we shall all, I that speak, and you that hear, "stand at the judgment seat of Christ." And we are now reserved on this earth, which is not our home, in this prison of flesh and blood, perhaps many of us in chains of darkness too, till we are ordered to be brought forth. Here a man is questioned concerning one or two acts which he is supposed to have committed; there we are to give an account of all our works, from the cradle to the grave; of all our words; of all our desires and tempers, all the thoughts and intents of our hearts; of all the use we have made of our various talents, whether of mind, body, or fortune, till God said, "Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward." In this court it is possible some who are guilty may escape for want of evidence, but there is no want of evidence in that court. All

men with whom you had the most secret intercourse, who were privy to all your designs and actions, are ready before your face. So are all the spirits of darkness, who inspired evil designs, and assisted in the execution of them. So are all the angels of God, those eyes of the Lord, that run to and fro over all the earth, who watched over your soul, and laboured for your good, so far as you would permit. So is your own conscience, a thousand witnesses in one, now no more capable of being either blinded or silenced, but constrained to know and to speak the naked truth, touching all your thoughts, and words, and actions. And is conscience as a thousand witnesses? Yea, but God is as a thousand consciences! O who can stand before the face of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ!

See! see! He cometh! He maketh the clouds his chariot! He rideth upon the wings of the wind! A devouring fire goeth before him, and after him a flame burneth! See! He sitteth upon his throne, clothed with light as with a garment, arrayed with majesty and honour! Behold, his eyes are as a flame of fire, his voice as the sound of many waters!

How will ye escape? Will ye call to the mountains to fall on you, the rocks to cover you? Alas! the mountains themselves, the rocks, the earth, the heavens, are just ready to flee away! Can ye prevent the sentence? Wherewith? With all the substance of thy house, with thousands of gold and silver? Blind wretch! Thou camest naked from thy mother's womb, and more naked into eternity. Hear the Lord, the Judge! "Come, ye blessed of my Father! inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Joyful sound! how widely different from that voice which echoes through the expanse of heaven, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels!" And who is he that can prevent or retard the full execution of either sentence? Vain hope!

Lo, hell is moved from beneath to receive those who are ripe for destruction! And the everlasting doors lift up their heads that the heirs of glory may come in!—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 134, 135.

The Judge of all will then inquire, "How didst thou employ thy soul? I intrusted thee with an immortal spirit, endowed with various powers and faculties, with understanding, imagination, memory, will, affections. I gave thee withal full and express directions how all these were to be employed. Didst thou employ thy understanding, as far as it was capable, according to those directions, namely, in the knowledge of thyself and me? my nature, my attributes? my works: whether of creation, of providence, or of grace? in acquainting thyself with my word? in using every means to increase thy knowledge thereof? in meditating thereon day and night? Didst thou employ thy memory, according to my will, in treasuring up whatever knowledge thou hadst acquired which might conduce to my glory, to thy own salvation, or the advantage of others? Didst thou store up therein, not things of no value, but whatever instruction thou hadst learned from my word; and whatever experience thou hadst gained of my wisdom, truth, power, and mercy? Was thy imagination employed, not in painting vain images, much less such as nourished 'foolish and hurtful desires;' but in representing to thee whatever would profit thy soul, and awaken thy pursuit of wisdom and holiness? Didst thou follow my directions with regard to thy will? Was it wholly given up to me? Was it swallowed up in mine, so as never to oppose, but always run parallel with it? Were thy affections placed and regulated in such a manner as I appointed in my word? Didst thou give me thy heart? Didst thou not love the world, neither the things of the world? Was I the object of thy love? Was all thy desire unto me, and unto the remembrance of my name? Was I the joy of thy

heart, the delight of thy soul, the chief among ten thousand? Didst thou sorrow for nothing but what grieved my Spirit? Didst thou fear and hate nothing but sin? Did the whole stream of thy affections flow back to the ocean from whence they came? Were thy thoughts employed according to my will? Not in ranging to the ends of the earth; not on folly or sin; but on 'whatsoever things were pure, whatsoever things were holy:' on whatsoever was conducive to my glory, and to 'peace and good will among men?' "

Thy Lord will then inquire, "How didst thou employ the body wherewith I intrusted thee? I gave thee a tongue to praise me therewith: didst thou use it to the end for which it was given? Didst thou employ it, not in evil speaking, or idle speaking, not in uncharitable or unprofitable conversation, but in such as was good, as was necessary or useful either to thyself or others? such as always tended, directly or indirectly, to 'minister grace to the hearers?' I gave thee, together with thy other senses, those grand avenues of knowledge, sight and hearing: were these employed to those excellent purposes for which they were bestowed upon thee? in bringing thee in more and more instruction in righteousness and true holiness? I gave thee hands and feet, and various members, wherewith to perform the works which were prepared for thee: were they employed, not in doing 'the will of the flesh,' of thy evil nature, or the will of the mind, (the things to which thy reason or fancy led thee,) but 'the will of Him that sent' thee into the world, merely to work out thy own salvation? Didst thou present all thy members, not to sin, as instruments of unrighteousness, but to me alone, through the Son of my love, 'as instruments of righteousness?' "

The Lord of all will next inquire, "How didst thou employ the worldly goods which I lodged in thy hands? Didst thou use thy food, not so as to seek or place thy

happiness therein, but so as to preserve the body in health, in strength, and vigour, a fit instrument for the soul? Didst thou use apparel, not to nourish pride or vanity, much less to tempt others to sin, but conveniently and decently to defend thyself from the injuries of the weather? Didst thou prepare and use thy house, and all other conveniences, with a single eye to my glory? in every point seeking not thy own honour, but mine; studying to please not thyself, but me? Once more: in what manner didst thou employ that comprehensive talent, money? Not in gratifying the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life? Not squandering it away in vain expenses, the same as throwing it into the sea? Not hoarding it up to leave behind thee, the same as burying it in the earth? But first supplying thy own reasonable wants, together with those of thy family; then restoring the remainder to me, through the poor, whom I had appointed to receive it; looking upon thyself as only one of that number of poor whose wants were to be supplied out of that part of my substance which I had placed in thy hands for this purpose, leaving thee the right of being supplied first, and the blessedness of giving rather than receiving? Wast thou accordingly a general benefactor to mankind? feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, comforting the sick, assisting the stranger, relieving the afflicted, according to their various necessities? Wast thou eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame? a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow? And didst thou labour to improve all outward works of mercy as means of saving souls from death?"

Thy Lord will farther inquire, "Hast thou been a wise and faithful steward, with regard to the talents of a mixed nature which I lent thee? Didst thou employ thy health and strength, not in folly or sin, not in the pleasures which perished in the using, 'not in making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the desires thereof,' but in a vigorous pursuit

of that better part which none could take away from thee? Didst thou employ whatever was pleasing in thy person or address, whatever advantages thou hadst by education, whatever share of learning, whatever knowledge of things or men, was committed to thee, for the promoting of virtue in the world, for the enlargement of my kingdom? Didst thou employ whatever share of power thou hadst, whatever influence over others, by the love or esteem of thee which they had conceived, for the increase of their wisdom and holiness? Didst thou employ that inestimable talent of time with wariness and circumspection, as duly weighing the value of every moment, and knowing that all were numbered in eternity? Above all, wast thou a good steward of my grace, preventing, accompanying, and following thee? Didst thou duly observe, and carefully improve, all the influences of my Spirit? every good desire? every measure of light? all his sharp or gentle reproofs? How didst thou profit by 'the spirit of bondage and fear,' which was previous to 'the Spirit of adoption?' And when thou wast made a partaker of this Spirit, crying in thy heart, 'Abba, Father,' didst thou stand fast in the glorious liberty wherewith I made thee free? Didst thou from thenceforth present thy soul and body, all thy thoughts, thy words, and actions, in one flame of love, as a holy sacrifice, glorifying me with thy body and thy spirit? Then 'well done, good and faithful servant! enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!'"—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 454–456.

SECTION II.

Rewards of the Righteous.

There is one circumstance which will follow the judgment that deserves our serious consideration: "We look," says the apostle, "according to His promise, for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,"

2 Pet. iii, 13. The promise stands in the prophecy of Isaiah, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered," Isa. lxv, 17,—so great shall the glory of the latter be! These St. John did behold in the visions of God. "I saw," saith he, "a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away," Rev. xxi, 1. And only righteousness dwelt therein: accordingly he adds, "And I heard a great voice from [the third] heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God," chap. xxi, 3. Of necessity, therefore, they will all be happy: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain," chap. xxi, 4. "There shall be no more curse, but they shall see his face," chap. xxii, 3, 4—shall have the nearest access to, and thence the highest resemblance of him. This is the strongest expression in the language of Scripture to denote the most perfect happiness. "And his name shall be on their foreheads;" they shall be openly acknowledged as God's own property, and his glorious nature shall most visibly shine forth in them. "And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever."—*Sermons*, vol. i, pp. 132, 133.

But the most glorious of all will be the change which then will take place upon the poor, sinful, miserable children of men. These had fallen in many respects as from a greater height, so into a lower depth than any other part of the creation. But they shall "hear a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be their God," Rev. xxi, 3, 4.

Hence will arise an unmixed state of holiness and happiness far superior to that which Adam enjoyed in Paradise. In how beautiful a manner is this described by the apostle: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying: neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are done away." As there will be no more death, and no more pain or sickness preparatory thereto; as there will be no more grieving for, or parting with friends; so there will be no more sorrow or crying. Nay, but there will be a greater deliverance than all this; for there will be no more sin. And, to crown all, there will be a deep, an intimate, an uninterrupted union with God, a constant communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, through the Spirit; a continual enjoyment of the three-one God, and of all the creatures in him!—*Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 87.

SECTION III.

The Resurrection Body.

The body that we shall have at the resurrection shall be immortal and incorruptible, "for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Now these words, *immortal* and *incorruptible*, not only signify that we shall die no more; for in that sense the damned are immortal and incorruptible; but that we shall be perfectly free from all the bodily evils which sin brought into the world; that our bodies shall not be subject to sickness, or pain, or any other inconveniences we are daily exposed to. This the Scripture calls "the redemption of our bodies;" the freeing them from all their maladies. Were we to receive them again, subject to all the frailties and miseries which we are forced to wrestle with, I much doubt whether a wise man, were he left to his choice, would willingly take his again:—whether he

would not choose to let his still lie rotting in the grave, rather than to be again chained to such a cumbersome clod of earth. Such a resurrection would be, as a wise heathen calls it, "A resurrection to another sleep." It would look more like a redemption to death again than a resurrection to life.

The best thing we can say of this house of earth is, that it is a ruinous building, and will not be long before it tumbles into dust; that it is not our home: we look for another house, eternal in the heavens; that we shall not always be confined here, but that in a little time we shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, from this burden of flesh, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. What frail things these bodies of ours are! How soon are they disordered! To what a troop of diseases, pains, and other infirmities are they constantly subject! And how does the least distemper disturb our minds, and make life itself a burden! Of how many parts do our bodies consist! And if one of these be disordered, the whole man suffers. If but one of these slender threads, whereof our flesh is made up, be stretched beyond its due proportion, or fretted by any sharp humour, or broken, what torment does it create! Nay, when our bodies are at the best, what pains do we take to answer their necessities, to provide for their sustenance, to preserve them in health, and to keep them tenantable, in some tolerable fitness for our souls' use! And what time we can spare from our labour is taken up in rest, and refreshing our jaded bodies, and fitting them for work again. How are we forced, even naturally, into the confines of death; even to cease to be; at least to pass so many hours without any useful or reasonable thoughts, merely to keep them in repair! But our hope and comfort are, that we shall shortly be delivered from this burden of flesh. When "God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death,

neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." O, when shall we arrive at that happy land where no complaints were ever heard, where we shall all enjoy uninterrupted health both of body and mind, and never more be exposed to any of those inconveniences that disturb our present pilgrimage! When we shall have once passed from death unto life, we shall be eased of all the troublesome care of our bodies, which now takes up so much of our time and thoughts. We shall be set free from all those mean and tiresome labours which we must now undergo to support our lives. Yon robes of light with which we shall be clothed at the resurrection of the just will not stand in need of those careful provisions which it is so troublesome to us here either to procure, or to be without. But then, as our Lord tells us, "Those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more; but they are equal to the angels." Their bodies are neither subject to disease, nor want that daily sustenance which these mortal bodies cannot be without. "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God will destroy both it and them." This is that perfect happiness which all good men shall enjoy in the other world—a mind free from all trouble and guilt, in a body free from all pains and diseases. Thus our mortal bodies shall be raised immortal. They shall not only be always preserved from death, (for so these might be, if God pleased,) but the nature of them shall be wholly changed, so that they shall not retain the same seeds of mortality. They cannot die any more.

Our bodies shall be raised in glory. "Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." A resemblance of this we have in the lustre of Moses's face when he had conversed with God on the mount. His face shone so bright that the children of Israel were afraid

to come near him till he threw a veil over it. And that extraordinary majesty of Stephen's face seemed to be an earnest of his glory. "All that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." How, then, if it shone so gloriously even on earth, will it shine in the other world, when his, and the bodies of all the saints, are made like unto Christ's glorious body! How glorious the body of Christ is we may guess from his transfiguration. St. Peter, when he saw this, when our Lord's face shone as the sun, and his raiment became shining and white as snow, was so transported with joy and admiration that he knew not what he said. When our Saviour discovered but a little of that glory which he now possesses, and which in due time he will impart to his followers, yet that little of it made the place seem a paradise; and the disciples thought that they could wish for nothing better than always to live in such pure light, and enjoy so beautiful a sight. "It is good for us to be here: let us make three tabernacles." Here let us fix our abode for ever. And if they thought it so happy only to be present with such heavenly bodies, and to behold them with their eyes, how much happier must it be to dwell in such glorious mansions, and to be themselves clothed with so much brightness!

This excellence of our heavenly bodies will probably arise in great measure from the happiness of our souls. The unspeakable joy that we then shall feel will break through our bodies, and shine forth in our countenances. As the joy of the soul, even in this life, has some influence upon the countenance by rendering it more open and cheerful, so Solomon tells us, "A man's wisdom makes his face to shine." Virtue, as it refines a man's heart, so it makes his very looks more cheerful and lively.

Our bodies shall be raised in power. This expresses the sprightliness of our heavenly bodies, the nimbleness

of their motion, by which they shall be obedient and able instruments of the soul. In this state our bodies are no better than clogs and fetters, which confine and restrain the freedom of the soul. The corruptible body presses down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weighs down the mind. Our dull, sluggish, inactive bodies are often unable or backward to obey the commands of the soul. But in the other life "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." Or, as another expresses it, "they shall run to and fro like sparks among the stubble." The speed of their motion shall be like that of devouring fire in stubble, and the height of it above the towering of an eagle; for they shall meet the Lord in the air, when he comes to judgment, and mount up with him into the highest heaven. This earthly body is slow and heavy in all its motions, listless and soon tired with action. But our heavenly bodies shall be as fire; as active and as nimble as our thoughts are.

Our bodies shall be raised spiritual bodies. Our spirits are now forced to serve our bodies, and to attend their leisure, and do greatly depend upon them for most of their actions. But our bodies shall then wholly serve our spirits, and minister to them, and depend upon them. So that, as by a natural body we understand one fitted for this lower, sensible world, for this earthly state; so a spiritual body is one that is suited to a spiritual state, to an invisible world, to the life of angels. And, indeed, this is the principal difference between a mortal and a glorified body. This flesh is the most dangerous enemy we have: we therefore deny and renounce it in our baptism. It constantly tempts us to evil. Every sense is a snare to us. All its lusts and appetites are inordinate. It is ungovernable, and often rebels against reason. The law in

our members wars against the law of our mind. When the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak; so that the best of men are forced to keep it under, and use it hardly, lest it should betray them into folly and misery. And how does it hinder us in all our devotions! How soon does it jade our minds when employed on holy things! How easily, by its enchanting pleasures, does it divert them from those noble exercises! But when we have obtained the resurrection unto life, our bodies will be spiritualized, purified, and refined from their earthly grossness; then they will be fit instruments for the soul in all its divine and heavenly employment: we shall not be weary of singing praises to God through infinite ages.

Thus, after what little we have been able to conceive of it, it sufficiently appears that a glorified body is infinitely more excellent and desirable than this vile body.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 510–513.

SECTION IV.

Punishment of Sinners.

Consider the *pœna damni*, the punishment of loss. This commences in that very moment wherein the soul is separated from the body; in that instant the soul loses all those pleasures the enjoyment of which depends on the outward senses. The smell, the taste, the touch, delight no more: the organs that ministered to them are spoiled, and the objects that used to gratify them are removed far away. In the dreary regions of the dead all these things are forgotten; or, if remembered, are only remembered with pain, seeing they are gone for ever. All the pleasures of the imagination are at an end. There is no grandeur in the infernal regions; there is nothing beautiful in those dark abodes; no light but that of livid flames; and nothing new, but one unvaried scene of horror upon horror! There is no music but that of groans and shrieks: of weeping, wail-

ing, and gnashing of teeth: of curses and blasphemies against God, or cutting reproaches of one another. Nor is there any thing to gratify the sense of honour. No, they are the heirs of shame and everlasting contempt.

Thus are they totally separated from all the things they were fond of in the present world. At the same instant will commence another loss, that of all the *persons* whom they loved. They are torn away from their nearest and dearest relations: their wives, husbands, parents, children, and (what to some will be worse than all this) the friend which was as their own soul. All the pleasure they ever enjoyed in these is lost, gone, vanished away; for there is no friendship in hell. Even the poet who affirms, (though I know not on what authority,)

> "Devil with devil damn'd
> Firm concord holds,"

does not affirm that there is any concord among the human fiends that inhabit the great abyss.

But they will then be sensible of a greater loss than all they have enjoyed on earth. They have lost their place in Abraham's bosom, in the paradise of God. Hitherto, indeed, it hath not entered into their hearts to conceive what holy souls enjoy in the garden of God, in the society of angels, and of the wisest and best men that have lived from the beginning of the world, (not to mention the immense increase of knowledge which they will then undoubtedly receive;) but they will then fully understand the value of what they have vilely cast away.

But as happy as the souls in paradise are, they are preparing for far greater happiness; for paradise is only the porch of heaven, and it is there the spirits of just men are made perfect. It is in heaven only that there is the fulness of joy, the pleasures that are at God's right hand for evermore. The loss of this by those unhappy spirits will be the completion of their misery. They will then know

and feel that God alone is the centre of all created spirits, and consequently that a spirit made for God can have no rest out of him. It seems that the apostle had this in his view when he spoke of those "who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." Banishment from the presence of the Lord is the very essence of destruction to a spirit that was made for God. And if that banishment last for ever, it is "everlasting destruction."

Such is the loss sustained by those miserable creatures on whom that awful sentence will be pronounced: "Depart from me, ye cursed!" What an unspeakable curse, if there were no other! But, alas! this is far from being the whole; for to the punishment of loss will be added the punishment of sense. What they lose implies unspeakable misery, which yet is inferior to what they feel. This it is which our Lord expresses in those emphatical words: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!"—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 148, 149.

Consider the company wherewith every one is surrounded in that place of torment. It is not uncommon to hear even condemned criminals in our public prisons say, "O I wish I was hanged out of the way, rather than to be plagued with these wretches that are round about me!" But what are the most abandoned wretches upon earth compared to the inhabitants of hell? None of these are, as yet, perfectly wicked, emptied of every spark of good; certainly not till this life is at an end; probably not till the day of judgment. Nor can any of these exert, without control, their whole wickedness on their fellow-creatures. Sometimes they are restrained by good men; sometimes even by bad. So even the tortures in the Romish inquisition are restrained by those that employ them when they suppose the sufferer cannot endure any more. They then order the executioners to forbear, because it is contrary to

the rules of the house that a man should die upon the rack. And very frequently, when there is no human help, they are restrained by God, who hath set them their bounds, which they cannot pass, and saith, "Hitherto shall ye come, and no farther." Yea, so mercifully hath God ordained, that the very extremity of pain causes a suspension of it. The sufferer faints away; and so, for a time at least, sinks into insensibility. But the inhabitants of hell are perfectly wicked, having no spark of goodness remaining. And they are restrained by none from exerting to the uttermost their total wickedness: not by *men;* none will be restrained from evil by his companions in damnation: and not by *God*, for he hath begotten them, hath delivered them over to the tormentors. And the devils need not fear, like their instruments upon earth, lest they should expire under the torture. They can die no more; they are strong to sustain whatever the united malice, skill, and strength of angels can inflict upon them. And their angelic tormentors have time sufficient to vary their torments a thousand ways. How infinitely may they vary one single torment—horrible appearances! whereby there is no doubt an evil spirit, if permitted, could terrify the stoutest man upon earth to death.

Consider, farther, that all these torments of body and soul are without intermission. They have no respite from pain; but "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up day and night." Day and night! that is, speaking according to the constitution of the present world; wherein God has wisely and graciously ordained that day and night should succeed each other, so that in every four and twenty hours there comes a

> "Daily sabbath, made to rest
> Toiling man and weary beast."

Hence we seldom undergo much labour, or suffer much pain, before

"Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,"

steals upon us by insensible degrees, and brings an interval of ease. But although the damned have uninterrupted night, it brings no interruption of their pain. No sleep accompanies that darkness: whatever ancient or modern poets, either Homer or Milton, dream, there is no sleep either in hell or heaven. And be their suffering ever so extreme, be their pain ever so intense, there is no possibility of their fainting away; no, not for a moment.

Again: the inhabitants of earth are frequently diverted from attending to what is afflictive by the cheerful light of the sun, the vicissitudes of the seasons, "the busy hum of men," and a thousand objects that roll around them in endless variety. But the inhabitants of hell have nothing to divert them from their torments, even for a moment:

"Total eclipse; no sun, no moon!"

No change of seasons, or of companions. There is no business; but one uninterrupted scene of horror, to which they must be all attention. They have no interval of inattention or stupidity: they are all eye, all ear, all sense. Every instant of their duration, it may be said of their whole frame that they are

"tremblingly alive all o'er,
And smart and agonize at every pore!"

And of this duration there is no end! What a thought is this! Nothing but eternity is the term of their torment! And who can count the drops of rain, or the sands of the sea, or the days of eternity? Every suffering is softened, if there is any hope, though distant, of deliverance from it. But here

"Hope never comes, that comes to all"

the inhabitants of the other world! What! sufferings *never* to end?

"Never! where sinks the soul at that dread sound?
Into a gulf how dark and how profound!"

Suppose millions of days, of years, of ages elapsed, still we are only on the threshold of eternity! Neither the pain of body or of soul is any nearer an end than it was millions of ages ago. When they are cast into *το πυρ, το ασβεστον*, (how emphatical! "The fire, the unquenchable,") all is concluded: "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!"

Such is the account which the Judge of all gives of the punishment which he has ordained for impenitent sinners. And what a counterbalance may the consideration of this be to the violence of any temptation! in particular, to the fear of man, the very use to which it is applied by our Lord himself: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But fear Him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell," Luke xii, 4, 5.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 152, 153.

SECTION V.

Restoration of the Brute Creation.

But will "the creature," will even the brute creation, always remain in this deplorable condition? God forbid that we should affirm this, yea, or even entertain such a thought! While "the whole creation groaneth together," (whether men attend or not,) their groans are not dispersed in idle air, but enter into the ears of Him that made them. While his creatures "travail together in pain," he knoweth all their pain, and is bringing them nearer and nearer to the birth, which shall be accomplished in its season. He seeth "the earnest expectation" wherewith the whole animated creation "waiteth for" that final "manifestation of the sons of God" in which "they themselves also shall be delivered [not by annihilation; annihilation is not deliverance] from the [present] bondage of corruption into [a

measure of] the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Nothing can be more express. Away with vulgar prejudices, and let the plain word of God take place. "They shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into glorious liberty," even a measure, according as they are capable, of "the liberty of the children of God."

A general view of this is given us in the twenty-first chapter of the Revelation. When He that "sitteth on the great white throne" hath pronounced, "Behold, I make all things new;" when the word is fulfilled, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God;" then the following blessing shall take place (not only on the children of men; there is no such restriction in the text; but) on every creature according to its capacity: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

To descend to a few particulars. The whole brute creation will then, undoubtedly, be restored, not only to the vigour, strength, and swiftness, which they had at their creation, but to a far higher degree of each than they ever enjoyed. They will be restored, not only to that measure of understanding which they had in paradise, but to a degree of it as much higher than that as the understanding of an elephant is beyond that of a worm. And whatever affections they had in the garden of God will be restored with vast increase, being exalted and refined in a manner which we ourselves are not now able to comprehend. The liberty they then had will be completely restored, and they will be free in all their motions. They will be delivered from all irregular appetites, from all unruly passions, from every disposition that is either evil in

itself, or has any tendency to evil. No rage will be found in any creature, no fierceness, no cruelty, or thirst for blood. So far from it, that "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf, and the young lion, together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain," Isa. xi, 6, &c.

Thus, in that day, all the vanity to which they are now helplessly subject will be abolished; they will suffer no more, either from within or without; the days of their groaning are ended. At the same time there can be no reasonable doubt but all the horridness of their appearance, and all the deformity of their aspect, will vanish away, and be exchanged for their primeval beauty. And with their beauty, their happiness will return; to which there can be no obstruction. As there will be nothing within, so there will be nothing without, to give them any uneasiness: no heat or cold, no storm or tempest, but one perennial spring. In the new earth, as well as the new heavens, there will be nothing to give pain, but every thing that the wisdom and goodness of God can create to give happiness. As a recompense for what they once suffered while under the "bondage of corruption," when God has "renewed the face of the earth," and their corruptible body has put on incorruption, they shall enjoy happiness suited to their state, without alloy, without interruption, and without end.

May I be permitted to mention here a conjecture concerning the brute creation? What if it should then please the all-wise, the all-gracious Creator, to raise them higher in the scale of beings? What if it should please him when he makes us "equal to angels" to make them what we are now—creatures capable of God; capable of knowing, and loving, and enjoying the Author of their being? If it should

be so, ought our eye to be evil because he is good? However this be, he will certainly do what will be most for his own glory.

If it be objected to all this, (as very probably it will,) "But of what use will those creatures be in that future state?" I answer this by another question: What use are they of now? If there be (as has commonly been supposed) eight thousand species of insects, who is able to inform us of what use seven thousand of them are? If there are four thousand species of fishes, who can tell us of what use are more than three thousand of them? If there are six hundred sorts of birds, who can tell of what use five hundred of those species are? If there be four hundred sorts of beasts, to what use do three hundred of them serve? Consider this; consider how little we know of even the present designs of God, and then you will not wonder that we know still less of what he designs to do in the new heavens and the new earth.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 54–56.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF ANGELS.

SECTION I.

The Nature and Office of the Good.

"ARE they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them that shall be heirs of salvation?"

The question is, according to the manner of the apostle, equivalent to a strong affirmation. And hence we learn, first, that with regard to their essence, or nature, they are

all spirits; not material beings; not clogged with flesh and blood like us; but having bodies, if any, not gross and earthly like ours, but of a finer substance; resembling fire or flame more than any other of these lower elements. And is not something like this intimated in those words of the Psalmist: "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire," Psa. civ, 4. As spirits, he has endued them with understanding, will or affections, (which are, indeed, the same thing; as the affections are only the will exerting itself various ways,) and liberty. And are not these, understanding, will, and liberty, essential to, if not the essence of a spirit?

But who of the children of men can comprehend what is the *understanding* of an angel? Who can comprehend how far their *sight* extends? Analogous to sight in men, though not the same; but thus we are constrained to speak through the poverty of human language: probably not only over one hemisphere of the earth; yea, or,

"Tenfold the length of this terrene;"

or even of the solar system; but so far as to take, in one view, the whole extent of the creation! And we cannot conceive any defect in their perception; neither any error in their understanding. But in what manner do they use their understanding? We must in no wise imagine that they creep from one truth to another by that slow method which we call reasoning. Undoubtedly they see, at one glance, whatever truth is presented to their understanding; and that with all the certainty and clearness that we mortals see the most self-evident axiom. Who then can conceive the extent of their *knowledge?* not only of the nature, attributes, and works of God, whether of creation or providence, but of the circumstances, actions, words, tempers, yea, and thoughts of men. For although "God" only "knows the hearts of all men," ("unto whom are known all his works,") together with the changes they undergo,

"from the beginning of the world," yet we cannot doubt but his angels know the hearts of those to whom they more immediately minister. Much less can we doubt of their knowing the thoughts that are in our hearts at any particular time. What should hinder their seeing them as they arise? Not the thin veil of flesh and blood. Can these intercept the view of a spirit? Nay,

> "Walls within walls no more its passage bar,
> Than unopposing space of liquid air."

Far more easily, then, and far more perfectly than we can read a man's thoughts in his face, do these sagacious beings read our thoughts just as they rise in our hearts, inasmuch as they see the kindred spirit more clearly than we see the body. If this seem strange to any who had not adverted to it before, let him only consider: Suppose my spirit was out of the body, could not an angel see my thoughts, even without my uttering any words, (if words are used in the world of spirits?) And cannot that ministering spirit see them just as well now I am in the body? It seems, therefore, to be an unquestionable truth, (although perhaps not commonly observed,) that angels know not only the words and actions, but also the thoughts of those to whom they minister. And, indeed, without this knowledge they would be very ill qualified to perform various parts of their ministry.

And what an inconceivable degree of *wisdom* must they have acquired by the use of their amazing faculties, over and above that with which they were originally endued, in the course of more than six thousand years! (That they have existed so long we are assured; for they "sang together when the foundations of the earth were laid.") How immensely must their wisdom have increased during so long a period, not only by surveying the hearts and ways of men in their successive generations, but by observing the works of God: his works of creation, his works

of providence, his works of grace; and, above all, by "continually beholding the face of their Father which is in heaven?"

What measures of *holiness*, as well as wisdom, have they derived from this inexhaustible ocean!

> "A boundless, fathomless abyss,
> Without a bottom or a shore!"

Are they not hence, by way of eminence, styled the *holy angels?* What goodness, what philanthropy, what love to man, have they drawn from those rivers that are at his right hand? such as we cannot conceive to be exceeded by any but that of God our Saviour. And they are still drinking in more love from this "Fountain of living water."

Such is the knowledge and wisdom of the angels of God, as we learn from his own oracles. Such are their holiness and goodness. And how astonishing is their *strength!* Even a fallen angel is styled by an inspired writer, "The prince of the power of the air." How terrible a proof did he give of this power in suddenly raising the whirlwind, which "smote the four corners of the house," and destroyed all the children of Job at once! chap. i. That this was his work, we may easily learn from the command to "save his life." But he gave a far more terrible proof of his strength (if we suppose that "messenger of the Lord" to have been an evil angel, as is not at all improbable) when he smote with death a hundred fourscore and five thousand Assyrians in one night, nay, possibly in one hour, if not one moment. Yet a strength abundantly greater than this must have been exerted by that angel (whether he was an angel of light or of darkness, which is not determined by the text) who smote in one hour "all the first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast." For considering the extent of the land of Egypt, the immense populousness thereof, and the innumerable cattle fed in their houses and grazing in their fruitful fields,

the men and beasts who were slain in that night must have amounted to several millions! And if this be supposed to have been an evil angel, must not a good angel be as strong, yea, stronger than he? for surely any good angel must have more power than even an *archangel ruined.* And what power must the "four angels" in the Revelation have who were appointed to "keep the four winds of heaven?" There seems, therefore, no extravagance in supposing that, if God were pleased to permit, any of the angels of light could heave the earth and all the planets out of their orbits; yea, that he could arm himself with all these elements, and crush the whole frame of nature. Indeed, we do not know how to set any bounds to the strength of these first-born children of God.

And although none but their great Creator is omnipresent; although none besides him can ask, "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" yet, undoubtedly, he has given an immense sphere of action (though not unbounded) to created spirits. "The prince of the kingdom of Persia," (mentioned Dan. x, 13,) though probably an evil angel, seems to have had a sphere of action, both of knowledge and power, as extensive as that vast empire. And the same, if not greater, we may reasonably ascribe to the good angel whom he withstood for one and twenty days.

The angels of God have great power, in particular, over the human body—power either to cause or remove pain and diseases, either to kill or to heal. They perfectly well understand whereof we are made; they know all the springs of this curious machine; and can doubtless, by God's permission, touch any of them, so as either to stop or restore its motion. Of this power, even in an evil angel, we have a clear instance in the case of Job, whom he "smote with sore boils" all over, "from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot." And in that instant, undoubtedly, he would have killed him, if God had not saved

his life. And, on the other hand, of the power of angels to heal, we have a remarkable instance in the case of Daniel. There remained no "strength in me," said the prophet; "neither was there breath in me." "Then one came and touched me, and said, Peace be unto thee; be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened," chap. x, 17, &c. On the other hand, when they are commissioned from above, may they not put a period to human life? There is nothing improbable in what Dr. Parnell supposes the angel to say to the hermit, concerning the death of the child:—

> "To all but thee, in fits he seem'd to go:
> And 'twas my ministry to deal the blow."

From this great truth the heathen poets probably derived their imagination, that Iris used to be sent down from heaven to discharge souls out of their bodies. And perhaps the sudden death of many of the children of God may be owing to the ministry of an angel.

So perfectly are the angels of God qualified for their high office. It remains to inquire, How they discharge their office? How do they minister to the heirs of salvation?

I will not say, that they do not minister at all to those who, through their obstinate impenitence and unbelief, disinherit themselves of the kingdom. This world is a world of mercy, wherein God pours down many mercies, even on the evil and the unthankful. And many of these, it is probable, are conveyed even to them by the ministry of angels, especially so long as they have any thought of God, or any fear of God before their eyes. But it is their favourite employ, their peculiar office, to minister to the heirs of salvation; to those who are now "saved by faith," or at least seeking God in sincerity.

Is it not their first care to minister to our souls? But

we must not expect this will be done *with observation*, in such a manner as that we may clearly distinguish their working from the workings of our own minds. We have no more reason to look for this than for their appearing in a visible shape. Without this they can, in a thousand ways, apply to our understanding. They may assist us in our search after truth, remove many doubts and difficulties, throw light on what was before dark and obscure, and confirm us in the truth that is after godliness. They may warn us of evil in disguise, and place what is good in a clear, strong light. They may gently move our will to embrace what is good, and fly from that which is evil. They may, many times, quicken our dull affections, increase our holy hope or filial fear, and assist us more ardently to love Him who has first loved us. Yea, they may be sent of God to answer that whole prayer put into our mouths by pious Bishop Kenn:

> "O may thy angels, while I sleep,
> Around my bed thy vigils keep;
> Their love angelical instil:
> Stop every avenue of ill.
> May they celestial joys rehearse,
> And thought to thought with me converse!"

although the manner of this we shall not be able to explain while we dwell in the body.

May they not minister also to us, with respect to our bodies, in a thousand ways which we do not now understand? They may prevent our falling into many dangers which we are not sensible of; and may deliver us out of many others, though we know not whence our deliverance comes. How many times have we been strangely and unaccountably preserved in sudden and dangerous falls! and it is well if we did not impute that preservation to chance, or to our own wisdom or strength. Not so: it was God gave his angels charge over us, and in their hands they bore us

up. Indeed, men of the world will always impute such deliverances to accident or second causes. To these, possibly, some of them might have imputed Daniel's preservation in the lions' den. But himself ascribes it to the true cause: "My God hath sent his angel, and shut the mouths of the lions," Dan. vi, 22.

When a violent disease, supposed incurable, is totally and suddenly removed, it is by no means improbable that this is effected by the ministry of an angel. And perhaps it is owing to the same cause that a remedy is unaccountably suggested, either to the sick person, or some attending upon him, by which he is entirely cured.

It seems what are usually called divine dreams may be frequently ascribed to angels. We have a remarkable instance of this kind related by one that will hardly be thought an enthusiast; for he was a heathen, a philosopher, and an emperor—I mean Marcus Antoninus. "In his meditations he solemnly thanks God for revealing to him, when he was at Cajeta, in a dream, what totally cured the bloody flux, which none of his physicians were able to heal." And why may we not suppose that God gave him this notice by the ministry of an angel?

And how often does God deliver us from evil men by the ministry of his angels, overturning whatever their rage, or malice, or subtlety, had plotted against us? These are about their bed, and about their path, and privy to all their dark designs; and many of them, undoubtedly, they brought to naught by means that we think not of. Sometimes they blast their favourite schemes in the beginning; sometimes when they are just ripe for execution. And this they can do by a thousand means that we are not aware of. They can check them in their mid career by bereaving them of courage or strength; by striking faintness through their loins, or turning their wisdom into foolishness. Sometimes they bring to light the hidden things of darkness,

and show us the traps that are laid for our feet. In these and various other ways they hew the snares of the ungodly in pieces.

Another grand branch of their ministry is to counterwork evil angels, who are continually going about, not only as roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour; but more dangerously still, as angels of light, seeking whom they may deceive. And how great is the number of these! Are they not as the stars of heaven for multitude? How great is their subtlety! matured by the experience of above six thousand years. How great is their strength! only inferior to that of the angels of God. The strongest of the sons of men are but as grasshoppers before them. And what an advantage have they over us by that single circumstance, that they are invisible! As we have not strength to repel their force, so we have not skill to decline it. But the merciful Lord hath not given us up to the will of our enemies. "His eyes," that is, his holy angels, "run to and fro over all the earth." And if our eyes were opened, we should see "they are more that are for us than they that are against us." We should see

> "A convoy attends,
> A ministering host of invisible friends."

And whenever those assault us in soul or in body, these are able, willing, ready to defend us; who are at least equally strong, equally wise, and equally vigilant. And who can hurt us while we have armies of angels, and the God of angels, on our side?

Ane we may make one general observation: whatever assistance God gives to men by men, the same, and frequently in a higher degree, he gives to them by angels. Does he administer to us by men light when we are in darkness? joy when we are in heaviness? deliverance when we are in danger? ease and health when we are

sick or in pain? It cannot be doubted but he frequently conveys the same blessings by the ministry of angels, not so sensibly, indeed, but full as effectually, though the messengers are not seen. Does he frequently deliver us by means of men from the violence and subtlety of our enemies? Many times he works the same deliverance by those invisible agents. These shut the mouths of the human lions, so that they have no power to hurt us. And frequently they join with our human friends, (although neither they nor we are sensible of it,) giving them wisdom, courage, or strength, without which all their labour for us would be unsuccessful. Thus do they secretly minister, in numberless instances, to the heirs of salvation; while we hear only the voices of men, and see none but men round about us.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 134–138.

SECTION II.

The Nature and Employment of the Fallen.

We cannot doubt but all the angels of God were originally of the same nature. Unquestionably they were the highest order of created beings. They were spirits, pure, ethereal creatures, simple and incorruptible; if not wholly immaterial, yet certainly not encumbered with gross, earthly flesh and blood. As spirits, they were endued with understanding, with affections, and with liberty, or a power of self-determination; so that it lay in themselves either to continue in their allegiance to God, or to rebel against him.

And their original properties were, doubtless, the same with those of the holy angels. There is no absurdity in supposing Satan, their chief, otherwise styled, "Lucifer, son of the morning," to have been, at least, "one of the first, if not the first archangel." Like the other sons of the morning, they had a height and depth of understand-

ing quite incomprehensible to us. In consequence of this, they had such knowledge and wisdom that the wisest of the children of men (had men then existed) would have been mere idiots in comparison of them. Their strength was equal to their knowledge, such as it cannot enter into our hearts to conceive: neither can we conceive to how wide a sphere of action either their strength or their knowledge extended. Their number God alone can tell: doubtless it was only less than infinite. And a third part of these stars of heaven the arch rebel drew after him.

We do not exactly know (because it is not revealed in the oracles of God) either what was the occasion of their apostacy, or what effect it immediately produced upon them. Some have, not improbably, supposed that when God published "the decree" (mentioned Psalm ii, 6, 7) concerning the kingdom of his only begotten Son, to be over all creatures, these first-born of creatures gave place to pride, comparing themselves to him, (possibly intimated by the very name of Satan,) Lucifer, or Michael, which means, *Who is like God?* It may be, Satan, then first giving way to temptation, said in his heart, "I too will have my throne—I will sit upon the sides of the north! I will be like the Most High." But how did the mighty then fall! What an amazing loss did they sustain, if we allow of them all, what our poet supposes concerning their chief in particular:

> "His form had not yet lost
> All its original brightness, nor appear'd
> Less than archangel ruin'd, and the excess
> Of glory obscured."

If we suppose their outward form was not entirely changed, (though it must have been in a great degree, because the evil disposition of the mind must dim the lustre of the visage,) yet what an astonishing change was wrought

within when angels became devils! when the holiest of all the creatures of God became the most unholy!

From the time that they shook off their allegiance to God, they shook off all goodness, and contracted all those tempers which are most hateful to him, and most opposite to his nature. And ever since they are full of pride, arrogance, haughtiness, exalting themselves above measure; and although so deeply depraved through their inmost frame, yet admiring their own perfections. They are full of envy, if not against God himself, (and even that is not impossible, seeing they formerly aspired after his throne,) yet against all their fellow-creatures; against the angels of God, who now enjoy the heaven from which they fell; and much more against those worms of the earth who are now called to "inherit the kingdom." They are full of cruelty, of rage against all the children of men, whom they long to inspire with the same wickedness with themselves, and to involve in the same misery.

In the prosecution of this infernal design, they are diligent in the highest degree. To find out the most effectual means of putting it into execution, they apply to this end the whole force of their angelical understanding; and they second it with their whole strength, so far as God is pleased to permit. But it is well for mankind that God hath set them their bounds, which they cannot pass. He has said to the fiercest and strongest of the apostate spirits, "Hitherto thou shalt come, and no farther." Otherwise how easily and how quickly might one of them overturn the whole frame of nature! How soon would they involve all in one common ruin, or, at least, destroy man from the face of the earth! And they are indefatigable in their bad work: they never are faint or weary. Indeed, it seems no spirits are capable of weariness but those that inhabit flesh and blood.

One circumstance more we may learn from the Scripture concerning the evil angels: they do not wander at

large, but are all united under one common head. It is he that is styled by our blessed Lord, "The prince of this world:" yea, the apostle does not scruple to call him, "the god of this world." He is frequently styled Satan, the adversary; being the great adversary both of God and man. He is termed, "the devil," by way of eminence; "Apollyon," or the destroyer; "the old serpent;" from his beguiling Eve under that form; and "the angel of the bottomless pit." We have reason to believe that the other evil angels are under his command; that they are ranged by him according to their several orders; that they are appointed to their several stations, and have, from time to time, their several works and offices assigned them. And, undoubtedly, they are connected (though we know not how; certainly not by love) both to him and to each other. *Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 140–142.

Whether or no particular men are attended by particular evil spirits, we know that Satan and all his angels are continually warring against us, and watching over every child of man. They are ever watching to see whose outward or inward circumstances, whose prosperity or adversity, whose health or sickness, whose friends or enemies, whose youth or age, whose knowledge or ignorance, whose blindness or idleness, whose joy or sorrow, may lay them open to temptation. And they are perpetually ready to make the utmost advantage of every circumstance. These skilful wrestlers espy the smallest slip we make, and avail themselves of it immediately; as they also are "about our bed, and about our path, and spy out all our ways." Indeed, each of them "walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;" or whom he may "beguile through his subtlety, as the serpent beguiled Eve." Yea, and in order to do this the more effectually, they transform themselves into angels of light. Thus,

"With rage that never ends,
Their hellish arts they try:
Legions of dire, malicious fiends,
And spirits enthroned on high."

It is by these instruments chiefly that the "foolish hearts" of those that know not God "are darkened;" yea, they frequently darken, in a measure, the hearts of them that do know God. The "god of this world" knows how to blind our hearts, to spread a cloud over our understanding, and to obscure the light of those truths which at other times shine as bright as the noonday sun. By this means he assaults our faith, our evidence of things unseen. He endeavours to weaken that hope full of immortality, to which God had begotten us; and thereby to lessen, if he cannot destroy, our joy in God our Saviour. But, above all, he strives to damp our love of God, as he knows this is the spring of all our religion; and that, as this rises or falls, the work of God flourishes or decays in the soul.—*Sermons*, vol. ii, pp. 142, 143.

THE END.

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